



Fact sheet

The new Skilled Occupation List (SOL)

On 8 February 2010, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, announced that the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL) was revoked from that date. He also announced his intention that the current Skilled Occupation List (SOL) be replaced from the second half of 2010 with a new list of targeted occupations. A new list of occupations has been developed based on advice from the independent body, Skills Australia. Skills Australia has been established by the Australian Government to provide expert and independent advice on matters relating to Australia's current, emerging and future workforce skills and workforce development needs.

The introduction of a new list of occupations is part of a package of proposed reforms that reflects the government's commitment to a labour market demand-driven skilled migration program.

The number of places available to independent skilled migrants in the skilled migration program is expected to fall as the number of places available for employer-sponsored skilled migrants increases. Employer-sponsored migration matches migrants directly to jobs in Australia, making it the best method to ensure the labour market gets the skills it needs now.

It is therefore important that the smaller number of independent skilled migration places that are available are filled by migrants with skills that are critical to Australia's economic development in the medium to long term. The new list of occupations identifies these skills.

The current SOL has more than 400 occupations. The new list of occupations, which was announced by the Minister on 17 May 2010, includes 181 occupations. The new list is available on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's (DIAC) website at:
<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/whats-new.htm>

It is intended the new list of occupations would deliver a general skilled migration (GSM) program more tightly focused on delivering high-value nation building skills.

The new list is intended to align the GSM program with Australia's overall workforce development strategy, also developed by Skills Australia. The new list is focused on targeting specialised occupations that require a long lead time of formal education and training. It includes managerial, professional, associate-professional and trade occupations. The list of occupations will be reviewed annually but it is expected that it will be relatively stable over time.

The Minister will be recommending that the Governor-General in Council make amendments to the *Migration Regulations 1994* to give effect to the framework in which this new list would be applied. The new SOL is proposed to commence on 1 July 2010.

It is anticipated the new list would apply to all new GSM applications lodged on or after implementation of the new SOL, with the exception of applicants who fall within the proposed transitional arrangements outlined below.



Proposed transitional arrangements

It is intended the new list would not apply to GSM applicants who at 8 February 2010:

- held a subclass 485 (skilled graduate) visa or had a pending subclass 485 visa application and who apply for a permanent or provisional onshore GSM visa by 31 December 2012; or
- at the date of the announcement had a pending GSM visa application.

It is also intended that transitional arrangements would apply to international students who on 8 February 2010 held a subclass 572 (vocational education and training sector), subclass 573 (higher education sector) or subclass 574 (postgraduate research sector) student visa.

It is intended these students could apply for a subclass 485 (skilled graduate) visa using the current SOL as long as they lodge their subclass 485 application by 31 December 2012.

Australia has a well deserved reputation for the delivery of quality education and training. Student visas allow people to come to Australia on a temporary basis for a specified period to undertake study at an Australian educational institution. While some students may choose to apply for migration on completion of their studies, there is no guarantee that a student will be eligible for skilled migration simply on the basis of having completed an Australian qualification.

International students are encouraged to choose a course of study that relates to an occupation they wish to pursue a career in, and not simply on the basis of trying to secure a migration outcome. The requirements for skilled migration will continue to change in line with the needs of the Australian economy and labour market.

People who would not be eligible for independent migration may be eligible to apply for migration in other visa categories. More information is available in a fact sheet on the department's website at:

www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/whats-new.htm

The department is operating a dedicated phone line to respond to any queries on the new list of occupations. The contact number is **1300 735 683**.