



Australian Government
Department of Employment
and Workplace Relations

Guiding Principles and Standards

for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities
(the Guide)





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The document must be attributed as the Guiding Principles and Standards for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities (the Guide)

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Foreword from the Minister for Skills and Training

Migrants are, and will always be, an essential part of Australia's economic and social fabric. They have helped build Australia's modern dynamism and diversity, contributing their skills, experiences and cultures to the making of a nation that is both outward-facing and internally cohesive.

The demand for skilled migrants, and subsequently skills assessments, remains high. Increased global competition for skilled labour has resulted in a greater focus on continuous improvement and innovation within the Australian skills assessment sector. A migration system that is fast, efficient, responsive to the Australian labour market, and fair for both migrants and employers positively impacts Australia's future prosperity and security.

The Guiding Principles and Standards for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities and the Best Practice Principles and Standards has been guided by extensive consultations across the sector, migrant communities, and other key stakeholders. The completion of both represents a significant milestone in the journey towards greater integrity and assurance measures in skilled migration assessments. It provides Assessing Authorities with the reassurance and clarity to aspire and align to best practice in the sector.

The Australian Government is committed to fostering a fair and efficient process that optimises the outcomes for migrants and help better unlock their potential. Innovation and change thrive when there is a shared sense of purpose and a willingness to collaborate.

It is encouraging to see such strong engagement and commitment from the sector in shaping these reforms to Australia's migration system. I look forward to seeing the positive impact these changes will bring to migrants, employers and Australia's workforce.

I am confident that these reforms will continue to enhance Australia's migration system, benefiting all who contribute to our nation's future.

The Hon Andrew Giles MP
Minister for Skills and Training

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

The skilled stream of Australia's [Migration Program](#)¹ is designed to attract migrants who can make a significant contribution to the Australian economy.

Skills assessments are mandatory for certain visa subclasses (and streams) to ensure prospective migrants have the skills, qualifications, and experience to meet Australian occupational standards. Skills assessments help maintain transparency, trust, safety, and quality by ensuring migrants are appropriately skilled.

Skills assessments are conducted by [relevant assessing authorities](#)² (**Assessing Authorities**), as outlined in regulation 2.26B of the [Migration Regulations 1994](#)³.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of the Guide is to:

- 1 Provide guidance for conducting skills assessments in line with [Best Practice Principles and Standards](#)⁴.
- 2 Set out how the government conducts assurance of Assessing Authorities.

The Guide is divided into 4 sections. Sections 2-4 are informed by, and expand on, the best practice principles and standards. The Guide is set out as follows:

- [Section 1: Introduction](#)
- [Section 2: Skills Assessment Delivery Standards](#)
- [Section 3: Sound Business Practice Standards](#)
- [Section 4: Assurance Framework](#)

As for the balance of the Guide, these standards have been set in consultation with the sector and other relevant stakeholders and approved by the Minister. They are subject to regular review.

For assistance navigating the Guide or to provide feedback, you may contact the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (**the Department**) by emailing AAPA@dewr.gov.au

¹ Skilled Migration Program - <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/skilled-migration-program>

² Relevant Assessing Authorities - <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/working-in-australia/skills-assessment/assessing-authorities>

³ Migration Regulations 1994 - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F1996B03551/latest/versions>

⁴ Best Practice Principles and Standards - <https://www.dewr.gov.au/assessing-authority-policy-and-assurance/resources/guiding-principles-and-standards-skilled-migration-assessing-authorities-guide>

1.3 Becoming an Assessing Authority

New organisations who are seeking to become an Assessing Authority, should refer to the [‘Instructions for Becoming a Skilled Migration Assessing Authority’⁵](#), for guidance on lodging an application for consideration.

Note: Bodies (other than existing Assessing Authorities) that the Department or the Department of Home Affairs identify as a potential Assessing Authority for a specific occupation(s) will still be required to submit an application.

1.4 Functions and Responsibilities of Key Players

The functions and responsibilities of key players within the skills assessment sector are identified in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Functions and responsibilities of key players within the skills assessment sector

Entity	Functions and Responsibilities
Minister for Immigration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Approves the composition of the Skilled Occupation List and oversees migration legislation. 2 Specifies organisations as Assessing Authorities through appointments in legislative instruments made under sub-regulation 2.26B(1) of the Migration Regulations 1994⁶.
Minister for Skills and Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 May approve organisations as Assessing Authorities, impose conditions on approvals and revoke the approval of an Assessing Authority under sub-regulation 2.26B(1B) of the Migration Regulations 1994⁶. 2 Notifies the Minister for Immigration of approved and revoked Assessing Authorities for specification in relevant legislative instruments.
Department of Home Affairs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Administers migration law and the Skilled Migration Program of which Assessing Authorities are a part. 2 Facilitates the Minister for Immigration’s specification of organisations as Assessing Authorities through the relevant legislative instrument. 3 Provides migration policy advice to Assessing Authorities, government agencies and other stakeholders. 4 Manages the Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority (OMARA) who registers and oversees more than 4500 registered migration agents who give immigration assistance.
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Supports the Minister for Skills and Training (the Minister) by performing a quality assurance function in relation to the sector. 2 Oversees Australia’s specified Assessing Authorities, promoting continual improvement and adherence to best practice principles and standards. 3 Assesses applications from entities seeking to become an Assessing Authority and makes recommendations to the Minister for consideration.

⁵ Instructions for Becoming a Skilled Migration Assessing Authority - <https://www.dewr.gov.au/assessing-authority-policy-and-assurance/resources/instructions-becoming-skilled-migration-assessing-authority>

⁶ Migration Regulations 1994 - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F1996B03551/latest/versions>

Entity	Functions and Responsibilities
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4 Provides skills recognition policy advice to Assessing Authorities. 5 Tests policy solutions to meet the needs of migrants and employers. 6 Liaises with the Department of Home Affairs, Jobs and Skills Australia, and other Australian Government agencies. 7 Ensures demonstration of Australia’s international obligations in skills recognition.
<p>Relevant Assessing Authority</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Sets the occupational assessment standards against which the skills of prospective migrants are assessed for a skilled occupation under sub-regulation 2.26B(2) of the Migration Regulations 1994⁶. 2 May set different standards for assessing a skilled occupation for different visa classes or subclasses under sub-regulation 2.26B(3) of the Migration Regulations 1994⁶. 3 Undertakes assessments of prospective migrants' qualifications, skills, and experience to ensure they meet Australian occupational standards. 4 Adheres to the Guiding Principles and Standards for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities⁷ including through participation in quality assurance activities. 5 Aligns assessment standards with industry requirements and Australian Government skills recognition policies and international obligations in skills recognition.

⁶ Migration Regulations 1994 - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F1996B03551/latest/versions>

⁷ Guiding Principles and Standards for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities - <https://www.dewr.gov.au/assessing-authority-policy-and-assurance/resources/guiding-principles-and-standards-skilled-migration-assessing-authorities-guide>

1.5 Best Practice Principles and Standards

Following extensive consultation, Government has developed [Best Practice Principles and Standards](#)⁸ to provide an aspirational yet measurable foundation upon which Assessing Authorities are expected to conduct skills assessments. They are embedded throughout the Guide, with a comprehensive overview included at Table 2.



⁸ Best Practice Principles and Standards - <https://www.dewr.gov.au/assessing-authority-policy-and-assurance/resources/guiding-principles-and-standards-skilled-migration-assessing-authorities-guide>

Table 2: Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities - Best Practice Principles and Standards

Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities - Best Practice Principles and Standards	
P1	User-friendly and migrant-centric experience
Clear, accessible, and user-friendly skills assessment processes, guidelines, and communications enhance migrants' overall experience and understanding. This supports more efficient and higher quality outcomes.	
1.1	User friendly, clear communication
1.2	Timely, informative, and accessible updates
P2	Reasonable and justified fee structures
Fees are commensurate with the cost of conducting high-quality skills assessments, do not impose an unreasonable barrier for prospective migrants, and represent value for money for applicants.	
2.1	Transparent fee structure
2.2	Affordable and globally competitive
2.3	Fees regularly reviewed
P3	Evidence based occupational assessment standards
Well informed assessment standards that are fair, sensible, and relevant, ensure prospective migrants have the requisite skills to secure meaningful employment and contribute to Australian society.	
3.1	Standards are evidence based
3.2	Flexibility in skills recognition methodology
3.3	English language requirements align with industry
3.4	Standards regularly reviewed with stakeholders
P4	Fair and equitable assessments
Objective and unbiased assessment of skills promotes consistency and fairness, regardless of background.	
4.1	Procedural fairness applied in decision making
4.2	Appropriate adjustments and support offered
4.3	Transparent and equitable dispute processes available
P5	Timely and efficient skills assessment delivery
Optimise the assessment process to reduce duplication and maximise efficiency, ensuring timely processing of applications.	
5.1	Assessment processes optimised for efficiency
5.2	Technology embraced to automate, systematise, and simplify administrative processing
5.3	Agile plans support an evolving migration landscape
P6	Meaningful employment outcomes are influenced
Post-assessment assistance is centred on providing information to assist migrants in obtaining meaningful employment, including vulnerable cohorts such as, but not limited to, partners, migrant women, refugees, and international graduates.	
6.1	Essential post-assessment information provided to applicants
6.2	Value of skills assessments explained to employers and industry
6.3	Post-assessment outcome insights sought to inform continuous improvement
P7	Integrity and transparency in operations
Integrity, security, and transparency in the operations of Assessing Authorities facilitates quality migration outcomes.	
7.1	Policy is evidence backed
7.2	Quality assurance activities support quality outcomes
7.3	Effective safeguards protect integrity of assessments

Section 2: Skills Assessment Delivery Standards

Noting the important role Assessing Authorities play in the skilled stream of Australia’s Migration Program, this part of the Guide provides guidance on best practice skills assessment delivery.

2.1 Occupational Assessment Standards

Under sub-regulation 2.26B(2) of the *Migration Regulations 1994*⁹, an Assessing Authority is responsible for setting the occupational assessment standards against which the skills of prospective migrants are assessed. The standards and methodology may vary for a given skilled occupation depending on the type of visa for which the skills assessment is required (e.g. a skills assessment to be used for a Temporary Graduate visa may only assess qualifications).

2.1(a) In accordance with best practice principle 3, occupational assessment standards **must**:

- i be developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including industry,
- ii be guided by the indicative skill level and tasks as described in ANZSCO,
 - a) NOTE: ANZSCO is a statistical tool first and foremost, and therefore serves as a framework rather than strict criteria. Industry experts **must** be consulted for nuanced understanding of occupational standards,
- iii reflect the standards expected in an Australian workplace for employment in the nominated occupation e.g. standards could be aligned with competency standards set out in training packages that comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework,
- iv not exceed the requirements for registration or licensing in the occupation (where applicable), including aligning standards with the lowest jurisdictional requirements,
- v not hold applicants to a higher standard than what employers would typically expect of Australian employees,
- vi focus only on skills, qualifications and/or work experience relevant to the nominated occupation, and
- vii be reviewed regularly, incorporating input from relevant stakeholders including feedback from migrants with firsthand experience.

2.1(b) The methodology used to assess applicants against these standards should:

- i be formulated in consultation with key stakeholders to ensure industry confidence in skills assessment outcomes,
- ii be proportionate to the risk and competency requirements of the occupation, only requiring practical testing where it is warranted and required by industry, and
- iii be flexible enough to allow an applicant to meet the standards through a variety of pathways (where industry, including regulatory bodies, allow for such flexibility). Noting

⁹ Migration Regulations 1994 - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F1996B03551/latest/versions>

that not all applicants become 'skilled' through a qualification pathway so where industry accepts an applicant's skills attained through work experience alone, without formal qualifications in that occupation, then this should also be accepted by an Assessing Authority.

- 2.1(c) Where there is more than one Assessing Authority specified as the relevant Assessing Authority for an occupation, the occupational assessment standards applied, and methodology used by each **must** be the same. Refer to '[Shared occupation protocols](#)' for detailed guidance around managing skills assessment for the same occupation across multiple Assessing Authorities.

2.1(A) Alternative skills recognition methods

- 2.1(AA) Some applicants might not have obtained their expertise through a formal qualification pathway or may only partially satisfy qualification requirements. Therefore, Assessing Authorities should consider offering more flexible alternative skills recognition methods where possible and appropriate. Such methods **must** be endorsed by industry and may include, but are not limited to:

- i Accepting extensive relevant work experience as evidence for meeting the occupational standards (applicable only to non-licensed occupations).
- ii Conducting behavioural, practical and/or technical interviews.
- iii Allowing applicants to fill small gaps in knowledge or skills through supplementary micro credentials and/or industry accepted gap training.
- iv Using practical demonstrations or tests to validate skills and competencies.

- 2.1(AB) Applying greater flexibility should be exercised cautiously. Alternative skills recognition methods should not contravene any relevant international standards and **must** be accompanied with a robust risk assessment. Assessing Authorities should consult with industry-specific stakeholders to ensure these methods effectively address current challenges while maintaining the integrity, safety, and competency standards that underpin a skills assessment for a particular occupation.

- 2.1(AC) If there is more than one Assessing Authority providing assessments for an occupation, the Assessing Authorities assessing that occupation **must** agree together on any alternative skills recognition methods.

2.1(B) Stakeholder engagement plan

Effective stakeholder engagement is paramount for developing and upholding robust occupational assessment standards that effectively and appropriately assess an applicant's skills against their nominated occupation.

- 2.1(BA) Assessing Authorities should have a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan to guide interactions that inform assessment standards and methodologies.

2.1(C) Changes to occupational assessment standards

- 2.1(CA) When occupational assessment standards and/or methodology change, Assessing Authorities **must** publish details of the changes on their website. Where practicable, this should occur at least three months before the intended implementation date. Information on the website **must** include:
- i reasons for the proposed changes,
 - ii the intended implementation date,
 - iii details regarding any impact to existing applicants, and
 - iv any changes to documentary evidence requirements.

2.2 Setting and Reviewing Fees

Best practice principle 2 states that fees **must** be commensurate with the cost of conducting high quality skills assessments, not impose an unreasonable barrier for prospective migrants, and represent value for money for applicants.

- 2.2(a) Ensuring that fees for skills assessment services remain appropriate, relevant, and aligned with the evolving demands of the skilled migration landscape is paramount. To achieve this, Assessing Authorities should:
- i provide clear fee breakdowns, outlining what is included, and ensure the full cost of a skills assessment is known upfront,
 - ii clearly distinguish between costs involved in obtaining the kind of skills assessment required to satisfy the skills assessment criteria in the Migration Regulations 1994, versus costs associated with registration and licencing requirements or optional additional services (such as points advice letters),
 - iii have a comprehensive refund policy that defines under what circumstances refunds are available and any associated administration fees, and
 - iv conduct regular fee reviews to maintain relevance and adapt to changing market conditions.

2.2(A) Notification of Fee Changes

- 2.2(AA) The Department acknowledges that changes to fees may be necessary from time to time and expects that any fee increases will generally be aligned with the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- 2.2(AB) Changes to fees should be communicated to the Department through the [Annual Assurance Review](#) report to ensure transparency and accountability.
- 2.2(AC) Notification of upcoming fee changes **must** also be published on Assessing Authority websites at least one month before they take effect.

- 2.2(AD) Where applicants have paid in full for a skills assessment, they cannot be charged additional costs arising from fee increases.
- 2.2(AE) Should fees require adjustment outside of the [Annual Assurance Review](#) cycle, Assessing Authorities **must** notify the Department. This notification, sent via email to AAPA@dewr.gov.au with the subject line ‘Notification of Fee Changes’ should be provided at least three months before the intended implementation date and should include:
- i a detailed schedule comparing previous and new fees,
 - ii comprehensive reasoning behind the proposed change,
 - iii the intended implementation date, and
 - iv assurance that:
 - changes will be published at least one month before implementation,
 - changes will not create unreasonable barriers for individuals applying for the service, and
 - additional costs will not be passed on to applicants who have paid in full for a skills assessment prior to the change in fees.

2.3 Processing Timelines

It is important for applicants to understand the application process, and the timeframes associated with each step of the process. Transparency provides applicants with assurance in the process and allows applicants to effectively plan for potential life change and future employment.

- 2.3(a) As per best practice principle 5, skills assessment delivery should be timely and efficient. Assessing Authorities should meet the following processing timelines as outlined in Table 3, noting the exceptions:

Table 3: Processing Timelines

Action	Timeframe	Notes
Receipt of valid application and check for application completeness	Up to 14 days (2 weeks)	<p>Assessing Authorities should aim to check an application within 14 days (2 weeks) from lodgement to ensure that it contains all the required documentation required to assess the application.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Applicants who have lodged a valid application must be provided a receipt that includes a unique reference number for the application. This is a requirement of the Department of Home Affairs. 2 Where an application is incomplete, a request for the required additional documentation must be sent.

Action	Timeframe	Notes
Skills assessment application processing	Up to 49 days (7 weeks)	<p>Assessing Authorities should aim to finalise a skills assessment within 49 days (7 weeks) from lodgement. Exceptions to this timeframe may include but not be limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Documentation required at the time of application is incomplete. 2 Practical testing elements are incorporated in the assessment methodology such as interviews, exams, technical assessments. 3 The skills assessment pathway involves an employment-based element for a prescribed period. 4 A case is deemed to be complex requiring review by a senior officer within the organisation prior to reaching an outcome. 5 A case requires an applicant to respond to adverse information (Natural Justice) to ensure procedural fairness. <p>To avoid delays or burdens, Assessing Authorities should ensure that valid exceptions are handled fairly and equitably, whilst being prompt and efficient, as outlined in best practice principles 4 and 5.</p>
Request for additional documentation and information	At least 28 days (4 weeks)	<p>Assessing Authorities must give applicants reasonable time, a minimum of 28 days (4 weeks), to submit additional documentation/information necessary for a decision against the assessment criteria.</p> <p>Where an applicant requests an extension to this timeframe for valid reasons, a reasonable extension appropriate to the circumstances must be granted.</p>
Request for a response to adverse information (Natural Justice)	At least 28 days (4 weeks)	<p>Assessing Authorities must give applicants reasonable time, a minimum of 28 days (4 weeks), to respond to adverse information that may negatively impact their skills assessment.</p>
Internal review processing	Up to 49 days (7 weeks)	<p>Assessing Authorities should aim to finalise an internal review of an assessment outcome within 49 days (7 weeks) from review lodgement.</p> <p>Internal reviews are when an applicant is disputing a 'not suitable' outcome of their primary skills assessment.</p>
External appeal processing	Up to 84 days (12 weeks)	<p>Assessing Authorities should aim to finalise an external appeal application within 84 days (12 weeks) from appeal lodgement where possible.</p>

Action	Timeframe	Notes
		External appeals are when an applicant is disputing an unsuccessful internal review of their 'not suitable' outcome.
Reassessment processing	Up to 49 days (7 weeks)	Assessing Authorities should aim to finalise a reassessment with 49 days (7 weeks) from lodgement. Exceptions to this timeframe are the same as detailed against Skills assessment application processing . For clarification of what constitutes a reassessment, please refer to the ' Reassessment ' section.

Where timeframes can't be met

- 2.3(b) Aside from the exceptions outlined above, Assessing Authorities have a responsibility to applicants to provide timely and efficient skills assessments.
- 2.3(c) Assessing Authorities failing to meet these timeframes should:
- i explore and adopt technological solutions to better monitor caseloads and automate, systematise, and simplify administrative tasks,
 - ii consult with industry stakeholders to develop more efficient and streamlined processes,
 - iii develop contingency plans with industry stakeholders to manage demand fluctuations, and
 - iv work closely with the Department to strive for improvement over time.

2.4 English Language Proficiency

- 2.4(a) Best practice standard 3.3 seeks to ensure English language requirements are aligned with industry standards and any registration or licensing requirements for an occupation. **If** English Language proficiency is required for a skills assessment for a specific occupation, Assessing Authorities should:
- i demonstrate collaboration with industry stakeholders (including employers, professional associations, and regulatory bodies) to determine the profession-specific minimum English language proficiency required for an occupation, and
 - ii accept the same suite of tests as defined in migration law, being:
 - International English Language Testing System (IELTS), including One Skill Retake (OSR)
 - Pearson Test of English (PTE)
 - Cambridge English (CAE) (also known as C1 Advanced)
 - Occupational English Test (OET), noting this is a test developed for health professionals
 - Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL iBT)

Note: Exceptions to this is where a specific language test(s) is prescribed by registration or licensing bodies relevant to the nominated occupation.

- iii provide clear and transparent communication and guidance on exemptions or alternatives to formal English testing,
- iv clearly explain that English language requirements in skills assessments are aligned to industry set requirements, whereas English language criteria for visas determines an applicant's ability to participate in the community,
- v benchmark English language requirements against international standards to ensure consistency and comparability with global norms. Where industry and/or registration/licensing bodies are requiring higher standards than comparable international counterparts, seek to understand their rationale and explain this to applicants, and
- vi monitor and evaluate English language proficiency requirements over time, with adjustments made as necessary based on feedback and changing needs.

2.5 Shared Occupation Protocols

Having multiple Assessing Authorities appointed to assess a single occupation presents significant risks to the quality and integrity of the skilled migration system. These risks include reputational risks to Assessing Authorities caused by inconsistent outcomes, as well as a risk of increasing the cost of assessments for potential migrants.

Notwithstanding historical precedent, only one Assessing Authority per occupation will typically be approved for appointment, with exceptions made at ministerial discretion.

2.5(a) In cases where there is more than one Assessing Authority appointed to assess a nominated occupation, steps **must** be taken to reduce the potential risks. To do this, the appointed Assessing Authorities should:

- i consult with each other to establish consistent occupational assessment standards, evidentiary requirements, and assessment methodology (including [alternative skills recognition methods](#)), and
- ii request that applicants disclose any outcomes or ongoing applications with other Assessing Authorities at both the lodgement and assessment phases of their application.

2.5(b) Where more than one Assessing Authority is appointed to assess a nominated occupation, they may also consider formalising their collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding to clearly define each Assessing Authority's roles, responsibilities, and operational approach.

2.6 Skills Assessment Process

The end-to-end skills assessment process should be conducted in accordance with all [Best Practice Principles and Standards](#)¹⁰.

¹⁰ Best Practice Principles and Standards - The Guide - <https://www.dewr.gov.au/assessing-authority-policy-and-assurance/resources/guiding-principles-and-standards-skilled-migration-assessing-authorities-guide>

2.6(A) Communication and Information Provision

- 2.6(AA) Assessing Authorities have a responsibility to meet accessibility standards by providing information, resources, application updates and support, in plain language, different formats, and via relevant platforms.
- 2.6(AB) In consideration of the diverse backgrounds of applicants, Assessing Authorities should develop their communication strategies using these general rules:
- i use plain and consistent language,
 - ii structure content so it is easy for readers to scan and quickly find what they are looking for,
 - iii avoid jargon, colloquialisms, or phrases with double meanings,
 - iv use visual aids to explain information (videos, imagery, flowcharts, graphs etc),
 - v provide multi-lingual options where possible,
 - vi ensure accessibility across various devices, and
 - vii aim for a readability score of Australian Grade 7 (a reading age of 12).

Migrant-centric

- 2.6(AC) Communication platforms **must** be designed with the user-experience front of mind. Assessing Authorities are encouraged to consult with industry stakeholders and migrants in the design and development of communication platforms and tools.

Communication channels and tools

- 2.6(AD) Assessing Authorities should use a range of communication channels and tools to disseminate important information relating to skills assessments.

Critical information for websites

- 2.6(AE) Assessing Authorities should include information that provides an applicant with all the guidance they need to understand and navigate the skills assessment process, including enough information to help applicants understand the likelihood of a 'suitable' outcome before making an application.
- 2.6(AF) To be considered as 'Best Practice' websites **must** include the information laid out below in Table 4.

Table 4: Website Information

What	Information required
Overview	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Role of Assessing Authority 2 Role of the Department of Home Affairs 3 Purpose of a migration skills assessment 4 What a migration skills assessment does not do
Governance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 About us 2 Fraud management 3 Privacy provisions 4 Complaints handling process
Fees and payment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Fees for all components of a skills assessment 2 Fees for reviews and appeals 3 Payment methods 4 Refund policy
Skills assessment criteria	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Preparatory information and resources (e.g. instructional videos, webinars, tool for determining occupation, etc) 2 Skills assessment eligibility (checklist of requirements, pathway wizard, flowcharts etc) 3 Required documentary evidence, including translation requirements
Assessment process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Outline of end-to-end process 2 Processing times 3 How to obtain status updates 4 Next steps – suitable and not suitable outcomes 5 Review/appeal process 6 Reassessment 7 Renewals
Employability information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Applicable registration and licensing requirements (where applicable) 2 Job-seeking in Australia 3 Networking opportunities (where known) 4 Professional memberships/accreditation (where applicable)
Help and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Assessing Authority contact details 2 Frequently Asked Questions

What	Information required
	3 Useful links to legislation, visas, relevant bi-lateral agreements, registration/licensing requirements for occupations, and translating and interpreting services, etc

2.6(B) Fraud Management

2.6(BA) Fraud within skills assessment applications represents a threat to the integrity of the skilled migration program. Applicants must provide evidence in their application to be considered against the relevant occupational assessment standards, which may contain false or misleading information and/or bogus documents. Assessing Authorities **must** have fraud management processes in place to deter, detect and respond to fraud in their caseload.

False or misleading information

2.6(BB) False or misleading information is information included in (or excluded from) an application for a skills assessment that is relevant to the skills assessment and is false or misleading at the time it is given. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- i making a false statement or misrepresenting the truth in an application,
- ii not including relevant adverse information in an application,
- iii deliberately not answering an application question.

Bogus Documents

2.6(BC) A bogus document is one that the Assessing Authority reasonably suspects is a document that:

- i purports to have been, but was not, issued in respect of the person, or
- ii is counterfeit or has been altered by a person who does not have authority to do so,
or
- iii was obtained because of a false or misleading statement, made knowingly or not.

2.6(BD) Examples of bogus documents include, but are not limited to:

- i where an employment reference for the applicant has been genuinely manufactured and issued, but subsequently altered to enhance duties performed and/or dates of employment,
- ii where a tertiary qualification genuinely manufactured and issued to an applicant was based on fraudulent information provided to the issuing authority or corrupt behaviour of staff within the issuing authority,
- iii where an applicant uses an impostor to sit an English language proficiency test,

- iv where an employment reference is provided on a fake letterhead citing false employment claims with a bogus employer.

Detecting Fraud

- 2.6(BE) Assessing Authorities should look for risk indicators in applications and undertake document/claim verification checks.
- 2.6(BF) Risk indicators are warning signs that something might not be right. Further investigation may reveal nothing of concern, or it may expose evidence of fraudulent activity. Examples include, but are not limited to:
- i illogical or unusual study and/or employment claims,
 - ii spelling and grammar mistakes on official documents,
 - iii overly elaborate documents with multiple fonts and extravagant borders,
 - iv content of work references plagiarised from open sources (for example, duties in a work reference copied directly from the ANZSCO website),
 - v previously refused applications,
 - vi multiple, different applications with the same information and/or contact details listed,
 - vii poor quality copies of documents submitted with an application,
 - viii overlapping dates of employment,
 - ix inability to provide evidence to support claims.
- 2.6(BG) To verify the authenticity and accuracy of documents and information provided by applicants, Assessing Authorities should embed integrity checks within assessments using a combination of the activities set out in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Verifying Documents and/or Claims

Activity	Description
Open-source checks	<p>Verify information through publicly available sources, including but not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Australian Business Number Lookup website¹¹. 2 Fair Work Ombudsman website¹² (for wage information). 3 Australian Bureau of Statistics website¹³ (for ANZSCO title/codes). 4 Business websites (for employer/employment claims). 5 Google Maps¹⁴ (for employer/employment claims, Assessing Authorities can enter the claimed business address and assess whether the street view matches the claimed operation of the business). 6 University websites¹⁵ (for education related claims).

¹¹ Australian Business Register - <https://abr.business.gov.au/>

¹² Fair Work Ombudsman - <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/>

¹³ Australian Bureau of Statistics - [ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, 2022 | Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)

¹⁴ Google Maps - <https://www.google.com.au/maps>

¹⁵ Universities Australia - <https://universitiesaustralia.edu.au/>

Activity	Description
	<p>7 Xe¹⁶ and OANDA¹⁷ websites (for currency conversion rates).</p> <p>8 Au Registry¹⁸ and Whois¹⁹ (domain registry for searching who owns a website).</p> <p>9 Search engines such as Google, and social media sites, such as Facebook, LinkedIn (for identity, employment, residency claims).</p> <p>10 Public Register of Authentic travel and identity Documents Online (PRADO) website²⁰ (for sample documents of travel documents to compare those submitted by the applicant).</p> <p>11 Google²¹ can also be used to check the uniqueness of any claims submitted by the applicant by doing a ‘reverse check’. Any wording contained within the application that does not seem to match the expected language abilities of the applicant can be cut and pasted into a Google search. This can reveal wording that has been ‘stolen’ from other websites such as university websites or employment websites and can indicate a fraudulent application.</p> <p>Information gained from open-source checks is not necessarily managed by reliable sources and should be viewed with caution to help establish an overall picture of an application, rather than being relied upon too heavily when making decisions.</p>
Telephone interviews	<p>Telephoning an applicant, a claimed employer or their contracted recruitment agency can be an effective way to verify details in applications or work references, especially if the enquiries can be made in Australia. If the applicant or claimed employer is outside of Australia, this may pose some issues but is still feasible in some circumstances.</p> <p>Assessing Authorities should look out for responses that appear overly scripted, repetitive, evasive, or lacking in detail</p>
Email checks	<p>Emailing or writing to an employer directly can be effective for large, reputable employers (or education providers). When emailing a lesser-known business, be aware of email addresses provided with applications that have non-specific domain names (for example, @yahoo, @hotmail and @gmail) as they may be less reliable. Where possible all contact information should be independently confirmed using open-source checks.</p>
Practical exercises	<p>Inviting applicants to demonstrate their skills and knowledge through technical or behavioural interviews, exams, and/or practical demonstrations, can mitigate the risk of missing fraudulent information in documentary evidence. Assessing</p>

¹⁶ Xe - <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>

¹⁷ OANDA - <https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en/?from=EUR&to=USD&amount=1>

¹⁸ Au registry - <https://www.auda.org.au/industry/au-registry>

¹⁹ Whois - <https://whois.auda.org.au/>

²⁰ PRADO - <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/prado/en/search-by-document-country.html>

²¹ Google - <https://www.google.com.au/>

Activity	Description
	Authorities must ensure that appropriately qualified assessors are engaged to conduct these assessments.
Site visits	Assessing authorities may wish to conduct a site visit to an applicant’s claimed place of employment to validate work experience claims and site supporting evidence (HR documents, workstation, awareness of employee amongst colleagues, etc).

Responding to suspected or confirmed fraud

2.6(BH) Assessing Authorities **must** report strongly suspected or confirmed cases of fraud to the Department of Home Affairs via the following email: economic.skilled.visa.assurance@homeaffairs.gov.au. This address can also be used to seek advice and discuss integrity concerns.

2.6(BI) The following **must** be included when reporting suspected or confirmed fraud:

- i Identifying details to assist the Department of Home Affairs to match against their records:
 - surname, first name,
 - date of birth, and
 - passport number

Note: a copy of the passport bio page would suffice for all the above.

- ii Contact details for the applicant.
- iii Contact details for the authorised recipient (this may or may not be a registered migration agent) and any concerns/observations about this person.
- iv Other persons/entities of interest in relation to the suspected or confirmed fraud.
- v A summary of the suspected or confirmed fraud, including actions taken to verify the claims/documents, and where applicable the applicant’s response.
- vi An overview of the status of the application, for example:
 - Still under assessment, no outcome determined.
 - Not suitable skills assessment outcome, including reasons for outcome and whether a review or appeal has been sought.
 - Successful skills assessment outcome, including reasons for outcome despite fraud concerns.
 - Successful skills assessment outcome where fraud concerns came to light post assessment.
 - Skills assessment outcome has been revoked due to confirmed fraud, including details of the fraud and where applicable, the applicant’s response.

Reporting conduct of authorised representatives

- 2.6(BJ) Where Assessing Authorities have concerns about the professional conduct of a registered migration agent, they **must** report it to the Office of Migration Agents Registration Authority (OMARA) using their online form: [Using a registered migration agent \(homeaffairs.gov.au\)](https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/who-can-help-with-your-application/using-a-migration-agent)²².
- 2.6(BK) Suspicions regarding unlawful or unregistered migration agents should be reported to the Department of Home Affairs via email: economic.skilled.visa.assurance@homeaffairs.gov.au, and to Border Watch through the [Border Watch Online Report](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-and-support/departamental-forms/online-forms/border-watch)²³.
- 2.6(BL) Whilst an authorised representative may facilitate the skills assessment application, the responsibility for ensuring that no false or misleading information and/or bogus documents have been submitted with the application rests with the applicant.

Deterring fraud

- 2.6(BM) Mitigation and early intervention will reduce the risk of fraud. Assessing Authorities should proactively implement strategies that include:
- i Openly advising and advertising to applicants the consequences of suspected or confirmed fraud in applications, including:
 - Receiving a ‘not suitable’ skills assessment outcome.
 - Reporting all suspected and confirmed fraud to the Department of Home Affairs for further consideration in visa applications and/or cancellations, including the requirement to satisfy [Public Interest Criteria 4020](https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/meeting-our-requirements/providing-accurate-information)²⁴.
 - Potential periodic ban on future skills assessment applications.
 - ii Alerting the Department of Home Affairs of emerging trends, and suspicions regarding a cohort of applicants or particular migration agent(s)/authorised representative(s).
 - iii Conducting more thorough assessments on cohorts with high incidences of fraud.
 - iv Conducting industry-wide awareness campaigns about the repercussions of fraudulent activities, including information on Assessing Authority’s websites and where practical websites of industry partners.
 - v Offering training programs for staff on fraud awareness and prevention strategies.

2.6(C) Lodgement Process

- 2.6(CA) The lodgement phase of the skills assessment process should be conducted in accordance with best practice principles 1, 4, 5 and 7.

²² Using a registered migration agent - <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/who-can-help-with-your-application/using-a-migration-agent>

²³ Border Watch Online Report - <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-and-support/departamental-forms/online-forms/border-watch>

²⁴ PIC 4020 - <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/meeting-our-requirements/providing-accurate-information>

Applicant Rights and Responsibilities

2.6(CB) To be considered ‘Best Practice’ and in accordance with [Australian Privacy Principles \(APPs\)](#)²⁵, Assessing Authorities **must** inform potential applicants of their rights and responsibilities when applying for a skills assessment. The application form or portal should include a declaration where an applicant acknowledges that they:

- i understand the purpose of the application,
- ii understand that information collection will only be used in connection with the provision of skills assessment services, except where an applicant also gives expressed consent to use information for prescribed other purposes (e.g. for professional membership or accreditation purposes),
- iii have provided accurate information and are aware of the consequences of providing false and/or misleading information,
- iv understand that reasonable enquiries related to their application may be made, including sharing information with other government agencies such as Department of Home Affairs, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority, Australian Federal Police, and individuals or organisations who help to carry out assessments, reviews, or appeal,
- v consent to the disclosure of personal information under specific circumstances,
- vi grant permission to seek feedback post-assessment,
- vii redact any information that is protected or not required, and
- viii anything else that applicants will need to be aware of under the *Privacy Act 1988*.

Lodging a valid application

2.6(CC) The processing timeline commences on application lodgement once an application is deemed to be valid. Assessing Authorities should make it clear to applicants what is required to make a valid application, and safeguards should be put in place to prevent invalid applications from being lodged.

2.6(CD) To encourage applicants to lodge valid applications, Assessing Authorities should prescribe criteria required to be met ‘at the time of application’ (i.e. what is mandatory to include with an application to deem it valid on lodgement). Types of ‘time of application’ criteria could include, but not be limited to:

- i All fields of application form or portal completed in English,
- ii Specific identity documents submitted in the requested format,
- iii Payment of the fee (where it is paid upfront, and not once application has been deemed valid),
- iv Prescribed English language proficiency documents,
- v Evidence of relevant qualifications, skills, and experience attained prior to lodgement,

²⁵ Australian Privacy Principles (APP) - <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/australian-privacy-principles>

vi Translation of all foreign language documents into English.

Receipt of valid application

- 2.6(CE) Upon receipt of a valid application, applicants **must** be provided with an application confirmation receipt that includes a unique reference number. Auto-responses to email lodgements will not be accepted by the Department of Home Affairs as evidence of skills assessment lodgement as they do not uniquely identify the applicant and their specific application.
- 2.6(CF) It is essential that applicants are provided with an application confirmation receipt within 14 days of lodgement, in acknowledgement that some applicants will require this evidence to lodge a visa application to remain lawfully in Australia.

Managing incomplete applications

- 2.6(CG) Incomplete applications cause processing delays and frustration for both applicants and Assessing Authorities. Whilst the onus is on the applicant to submit an application in an assessment ready state (i.e. inclusive of all the required documentation to allow for an assessment without needing to request additional documents), Assessing Authorities also play a part in assisting with this.
- 2.6(CH) To ensure applications are ready for assessment as soon as possible after lodgement, Assessing Authorities could:
- i invest in pre-application support and information to ensure applicants understand what documents are required to enable an assessment to be completed without the need to request additional information,
 - ii implement a client relationship team to facilitate application completeness, regular communication, and assessment readiness management,
 - iii analyse incomplete applications to try and determine the cause and use the results to inform process improvements aimed at reducing incomplete applications.
- 2.6(CI) Where an incomplete application is received, Assessing Authorities **must** give applicants reasonable time as set out in Table 3 to submit additional documentation/information necessary for a decision against the assessment criteria. Where an applicant requests an extension to this timeframe for valid reasons, a reasonable extension appropriate to the circumstances **must** be granted.

Priority Processing

- 2.6(CJ) Where circumstances warrant expedited processing of a particular application, Assessing Authorities should do so in a way that does not disadvantage applicants based on their financial means.
- 2.6(CK) Assessing Authorities should exercise their own judgement about what constitutes extenuating circumstances, but should broadly be limited to applications for skills assessments that are:

- i in relation to an occupation that the Government has directed should be prioritised for processing by Assessing Authorities (noting this doesn't mean priority processing for all identified occupations in demand, it refers to occasions where Government may direct Assessing Authorities to priority process certain occupations), or
- ii where an applicant has been invited to apply for a visa and has 60 days to complete and submit a visa application online, and their skills assessment has expired.

Light-Touch Pathway

2.6(CL) In the interest of being migrant-centric and streamlining processing wherever possible, Assessing Authorities may wish to consider a 'light-touch', expediated and lower cost pathway for applicants. For example, with:

- i Australian registration or licensing in their respective occupation; or
- ii the entirety of their CRICOS registered higher-education and/or VET qualifications obtained in Australia on a student visa and there is no work experience requirement in the skills assessment occupational assessment standards.

Noting verification of qualifications, registration/licensing, and identity checks **must** still occur.

Applying for assessment against multiple occupations

2.6(CM) It is not uncommon for applicants to have diverse qualifications, skills, and experience, relevant to multiple occupations. Where an Assessing Authority is appointed to assess numerous occupations, it should, where possible:

- i allow applicants to have their skills assessed against multiple occupations by way of a single skills assessment application, and
- ii provide separate outcome letters for each of the occupations assessed.

This increases the likelihood of an applicant receiving a 'suitable' outcome and provides applicants with multiple avenues to pursue a skilled migration visa.

2.6(D) Assessment Process

2.6(DA) The assessment phase of the end-to-end skills assessment process is guided by all of the [Best Practice Principles and Standards](#)²⁶. Within this framework, Assessing Authorities **must** ensure that every applicant receives a fair opportunity for a 'suitable' outcome by actively supporting them to effectively demonstrate their qualifications, skills, and experience.

²⁶ Best Practice Principles and Standards - <https://www.dewr.gov.au/assessing-authority-policy-and-assurance/resources/guiding-principles-and-standards-skilled-migration-assessing-authorities-guide>

2.6(DB) During the assessment process, Assessing Authorities **must**:

- i consider each application on its merits, noting that the background of each applicant is unique, as are their needs,
- ii request additional documents where an application is incomplete and allow applicants to submit additional documents for consideration in their assessment before a decision is made,
- iii allow applicants to correct errors or omissions in their applications, where fraud is not suspected,
- iv minimise unnecessary delays or bottlenecks, including removing redundant requirements,
- v provide diverse ways for applicants or their authorised representative to check the status of their application, including the ability to check whether there are any outstanding documents,
- vi regularly review assessment procedures and outcomes to identify any pattern of bias or discrimination and take corrective action as needed.

2.6(DC) Assessing Authorities should provide assessors with ongoing professional development to enhance their understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion principles, and guide them in applying flexibility in assessment practices whilst upholding professional standards.

Establishing identity

2.6(DD) Identity fraud occurs when an applicant attempts to fabricate or manipulate their identity or unlawfully adopts the identity of another person. Identity fraud may also be used to conceal or facilitate other fraudulent or illicit behaviour.

Examples include:

- i where a document (e.g. passport, birth certificate, family register) is genuinely manufactured and issued, but subsequently the identity details have been fraudulently altered (e.g. there is evidence of replacement of pages, substitution of photographs, manipulation of other biometrics data by the applicant or another criminal actor),
- ii where a document has been genuinely manufactured or issued to an applicant based on fraudulent information provided to the issuing authority or corrupt behaviour of staff within an issuing authority (e.g. where an applicant submits someone else's birth certificate to gain a passport for themselves),
- iii where a document, its content and/or source are fabricated, but purport to be in a form provided by a legitimate source (e.g. where an applicant fabricates a birth certificate with incorrect information).

2.6(DE) To manage identity fraud, Assessing Authorities should obtain a level of identity assurance that aligns to that of the Department of Home Affairs, that being:

- i applicants must supply at least three separate documents,

- ii documents must be verifiable,
- iii at least one document should be a current and valid (not cancelled or expired) government-issued identity document with the applicant's photograph and signature,
- iv if the applicant has changed their legal name, documents that show the change from one legal name to the next (statutory declarations are not acceptable), and
- v identification documents that are not in English include a translation of the document into English.

Assessing Authorities may also choose to use the [National Identity Proofing Guidelines \(homeaffairs.gov.au\)](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/criminal-justice/files/national-identity-proofing-guidelines.pdf)²⁷ as a better practice reference.

2.6(DF) In addition, Assessing Authorities should undertake as many of the following activities as necessary to assure the identity of the applicant and the integrity of the assessment process:

- i manual/visual comparison of a person's face against a photograph on a primary piece of evidence (either remotely or in-person),
- ii verification (where relevant) of a biometric template collected at registration (either remotely or in-person) against a biometric template held by an authoritative source,
- iii utilising the Department of Home Affairs' [Visa Entitlement Verification Online \(VEVO\)](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/already-have-a-visa/check-visa-details-and-conditions/check-conditions-online)²⁸ to allow access to visa details and conditions and to verify visa documentation, and
- iv quality assurance processes to ensure integrity and address situations of fraud within the organisation (for example, staff member receiving money for providing 'suitable' skills assessment outcomes).

Evidentiary requirements

2.6(DG) Evidentiary requirements are an integral part of the assessment process. If the information provided at lodgement is not sufficient to assess an applicant against the occupational assessment standards, Assessing Authorities should:

- i give applicants reasonable time, a minimum of 28 days (4 weeks) to submit additional documentation/information necessary to make a decision against the assessment criteria,
 - where an applicant requests an extension to this timeframe for valid reasons, a reasonable extension appropriate to the circumstances **must** be granted.
 - what constitutes a valid reason is at the discretion of the Assessing Authority.
- ii clearly outline what is required using simple English. Where evidence has been provided that is deemed insufficient, explain what is lacking and where possible give examples of alternative evidence,

²⁷ National Identity Proofing Guidelines - <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/criminal-justice/files/national-identity-proofing-guidelines.pdf>

²⁸ Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) - <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/already-have-a-visa/check-visa-details-and-conditions/check-conditions-online>

- iii ensure they are not unreasonable in terms of the type, format or certification of documents required. In most instances, scanned colour copies of documents should suffice, however Assessing Authorities are able to request [certified copies](#) of original documents when deemed necessary,
- iv evaluate the value and relevance of evidence being requested and provide flexibility in evidentiary requirements using the waterfall model which states that in the absence of A, provide B, in the absence of A or B, provide C, or in cases where standard evidence is unavailable utilise [alternative skills recognition methods](#) (where accepted by Industry). This is particularly relevant for refugees who may be unable to access specific evidentiary requirements, and
- v utilise a variety of communication methods to explain evidentiary requirements (e.g. calling an applicant by phone if their response to email is insufficient) to address misunderstandings and provide ample opportunity for applicants to provide the appropriate evidence prior to the application being finalised.

Assessment methodologies

2.6(DH) When assessing an applicant against the occupational assessment standards for a particular occupation and visa subclass, Assessing Authorities should:

- i establish the comparability of an overseas qualification(s) with established and nationally recognised frameworks. For example, the Australian Qualifications Framework, using tools such as the [Country Education Profiles](#)²⁹,
- ii assess the relevance and authenticity of the qualification to the nominated occupation,
- iii assess the relevance, authenticity, and depth of the applicant's work history, contacting previous employers or referees for verification,
- iv not impose unreasonable barriers for recognition,
- v offer appropriate adjustments and support to applicants facing obstacles, while maintaining integrity and meeting profession-specific or occupational registration and licensing requirements,
- vi apply flexibility to assessment methodology by allowing applicants to meet the standards through a variety of pathways, including, where appropriate, through [alternative skills recognition methods](#),
- vii consider embedding an internal review process whereby a senior officer conducts a review of the case prior to decision where a 'not suitable' outcome appears likely, and
- viii apply procedural fairness to decision making.

Procedural Fairness

2.6(DI) Assessing Authorities **must** afford procedural fairness to applicants throughout the assessment and decision-making process.

²⁹ Country Education Profiles (CEPs) - <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/services-and-resources/services-for-organisations/Pages/Services-for-organisations.aspx>

- 2.6(DJ) Procedural fairness relates to the fairness of the procedure by which a decision is made. The primary rules of procedural fairness include the following:
- i **Bias rule of natural justice:** This rule generally requires that the decision-maker can be objectively considered to be impartial, and free from actual or apprehended bias. A person can be disqualified from making a decision if a fair-minded observer, informed of the circumstances, reasonably suspects that the decision-maker is not impartial,
 - ii **Hearing rule of natural justice:** This rule generally requires that the person whose interests may be affected by a proposed decision is informed of the case against them and has the opportunity to respond
 - Specifically, the affected person must be provided with, and given the opportunity to respond to, any relevant adverse material available to the decision-maker prior to the decision being made. Further, the decision-maker must provide adequate notice that an adverse decision may be made, if one is being considered.
 - If an Assessing Authority obtains (or otherwise becomes aware of adverse information) that is relevant to a skills assessment decision, the decision-maker **must:**
 - a. disclose that adverse information to the applicant,
 - b. give the applicant enough information to ensure they understand the adverse information and its relevance to their skills assessment,
 - c. invite the applicant to respond to that adverse information, giving them a reasonable amount of time to do so (e.g. at least 28 days or 4 weeks), and
 - d. engage impartially with, and actively consider, any response provided by the applicant in the relevant timeframe, before determining a skills assessment outcome.
 - iii **Evidence rule:** This rule generally requires that the relevant decision is based on evidence that is relevant and logically capable of supporting the findings made.

However, the precise content of the requirements of procedural fairness varies depending on the context and circumstances of the particular case. Assessing authorities should make their own enquiries and obtain their own independent advice if required.

Skills Assessment Outcome

- 2.6(DK) Every effort should be made to support an applicant to achieve a fair skills assessment outcome. Ways to achieve this may include, but are not limited to:
- i recognising that applicants may have diverse qualifications, skills, and experience, which are relevant to the occupation, and
 - ii allowing applicants to re-sit practical testing components-before making a final determination on their application.

Reaching an outcome

2.6(DL) To ensure consistency in language, Assessing Authorities should use the terminology set out in Table 6 below when communicating a skills assessment outcome:

Table 6: Outcome Terminology

Outcome	Description
Suitable	The applicant meets identity requirements and occupational assessment standards for a nominated occupation.
Not suitable	The applicant does not meet identity requirements and/or the occupational assessment standards for a nominated occupation due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 evidence demonstrating that their skills, qualifications and/or experience are not to the required level; or 2 insufficient evidence being provided to establish identity, and/or demonstrate that they have the required skills, qualification and/or experience; or 3 false or misleading information being detected bringing their skills, qualifications, training and/or identity into question.
Withdrawn	The applicant has withdrawn their application.

- 2.6(DM) All applications received that have not been withdrawn by the applicant (or withdrawn with the applicant’s permission) **must** be finalised and a skills assessment outcome **must** be given.
- 2.6(DN) Where an applicant cannot be contacted and/or remains unresponsive to requests for additional information required to finalise their skills assessment, their skills assessment outcome should be finalised as **not suitable** on the basis that insufficient evidence was available to satisfy the Assessing Authority that they meet the occupational assessment standards. A determination **must** be made on the case, it cannot be simply closed.
- i It is reasonable to finalise an application in these circumstances only when 3 months have passed since lodgement and 3 attempts of contact have been made,

on different days and at different times, utilising a variety of communication channels.

Outcome letter

- 2.6(DO) Skills assessment outcome letters detail an applicant's suitability against their nominated occupation(s). Whilst they are primarily issued for migration purposes, they are increasingly being used in job seeking efforts. As such, outcome letters should include sufficiently clear information about the applicant's qualifications, skills, and experience, and the transferability of the same to an Australian setting.
- 2.6(DP) For integrity purposes, and where possible, skills assessment outcomes should be independently verifiable in a manner that is not administratively burdensome for stakeholders or the Assessing Authority (e.g. stakeholders can log into an online system, enter the outcome letter reference number, and verify the details of the outcome letter).
- 2.6(DQ) A skills assessment outcome letter **must** be given to the relevant applicant upon their application being finalised. The letter should include all details set out in the example skills assessment outcome templates contained at [Appendix 1 and 2](#).
- 2.6(DR) Not suitable outcome letters should either embed the reasons for the decision, or a separate decision record should be included with the letter. An outcome letter or decision record should include any review rights or complaint options available to an applicant.
- 2.6(DS) For integrity purposes each Assessing Authority **must** provide the Department and the Department of Home Affairs with a copy of their outcome letter templates and regularly advise when changes are made. Contact details are as follows:
 - i The Department - AAPA@dewr.gov.au
 - ii Home Affairs - economic.skilled.visa.assurance@homeaffairs.gov.au

2.6(E) Dispute processes, feedback and complaints handling

- 2.6(EA) Best practice principle 4 promotes consistency and fairness in decision making through the objective and unbiased assessment of skills. In furtherance of that principle, Assessing Authorities **must** have clear, transparent, and fair feedback and complaints handling process and avenues for review and appeal of decisions. This ensures the probity of the decision-making process.
- 2.6(EB) Assessing Authorities should conduct regular reviews of their dispute, feedback and complaints handling processes to identify trends and issues, adapting assessment practices and guidance accordingly.

- 2.6(EC) To give applicant's confidence in the skills assessment process, and to reduce the time and cost impact of disputing outcomes, Assessing Authorities should aim to have less than 15% of disputed cases overturned at review or appeal stage, in cases where no additional evidence was considered during the review process.

Internal Review

- 2.6(ED) An internal review offers recourse for an applicant who is not satisfied with a 'not suitable' outcome of a skills assessment. The applicant can ask an Assessing Authority to reconsider its decision through internal review.
- 2.6(EE) An internal review is a merit review process, which means that the reviewing officer must not simply examine the reasons given by the original decision-maker but rather considers the matter afresh and determines the correct or preferable decision in all the circumstances.
- 2.6(EF) The reviewing officer must be a person employed by the Assessing Authority who is of equal or greater seniority to the original decision-maker and who was not involved in any way in processing or assessing the application under review.
- 2.6(EG) The reviewing officer must have access to all relevant information, including information used by the original decision-maker in making the original skills assessment decision. In order to make the 'correct and preferable' decision, it may be appropriate for the reviewing officer to take into account new evidence that was not available to the original decision-maker. Accordingly, a different skills assessment outcome on a merits review does not necessarily indicate that the original outcome was incorrect.

Internal review procedure

- 2.6(EH) Assessing Authorities review procedures should:
- i prescribe the timeframe that applicants have available to apply for a review and any requirements for the form and content of their application,
 - ii advise applicants of the cost, ensuring that it is commensurate with the cost of administering the review,
 - iii detail how long a review will take to be finalised,
 - iv explain who will conduct the review, and
 - v commit to providing written notice of the review decision that will:
 1. outline the reasons for the decision, and
 2. provide guidance on how to pursue an external appeal where applicable.
- 2.6(EI) If the result of an internal review is that a different skills assessment outcome should have been made (i.e. the applicant should have received a 'suitable' skills assessment outcome), then the Assessing Authority **must**:
- i issue the applicant with a revised suitable skills assessment outcome letter,

- ii update any online skills assessment outcome verification systems with the new outcome, and
- iii consider refunding the review fee if no additional evidence was supplied or considered as part of the review process.

External Appeal

- 2.6(EJ) External appeals provide a final avenue for applicants to appeal both the original assessment and internal review assessment, where both processes had an outcome of not suitable. An external appeal thoroughly reviews the original and internal review assessment decisions.
- 2.6(EK) The Administrative Review Tribunal (the **Tribunal**) has no jurisdiction to review a skills assessment undertaken by an Assessing Authority on the request of a prospective visa applicant. This is because the Tribunal can only review a decision if an Act, regulation or other legislative instrument specifically empowers the Tribunal to do so, and the making of skills assessment decision or outcome is not a ‘decision’ under the [Migration Act 1958](#)³⁰ or any other legislation ([Silveira v Australian Institute of Management](#)).³¹
- 2.6(EL) Like the internal review, an external appeal is a merit review process. The appeal officer must have access to all relevant information, including information used by both the original decision-maker and the review decision-maker in making the original and review skills assessment decisions. In order to make the ‘correct and preferable’ decision, it may be appropriate for the appeal officer to take into account new evidence that was not available to both the original decision-maker and the review decision-maker. Accordingly, a different skills assessment outcome on a merits review does not necessarily indicate that the original and review outcomes were incorrect.
- 2.6(EM) External appeals **must** be conducted by an external assessor with expertise in the relevant occupation, such as a practitioner, academic, or regulatory/professional body representative, whose primary role is not with the Assessing Authority (or is in a section of the organisation that is not involved with skills assessments).

External appeal procedure

- 2.6(EN) Assessing Authorities external appeal procedures should:
- i prescribe the timeframe that applicants have available to lodge an appeal,
 - ii advise applicants of the cost, ensuring that it is commensurate with the cost of administering the appeal,
 - iii detail how long an appeal will take to be finalised,
 - iv explain who will conduct the appeal, and

³⁰ Migration Act 1958 - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C1958A00062/latest/versions>

³¹ Silveira v Australian Institute of Management (2001) 113 FCR 2018 [42] - <https://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/cases/cth/FCA/2001/803.html>

- v commit to providing written notice of the appeal decision that outlines the reasons for the decision, including reasons for upholding the original decision where applicable.

2.6(EO) If the result of an appeal is that a different skills assessment outcome should have been made (i.e. the applicant should have received a 'suitable' skills assessment outcome), then the Assessing Authority **must**:

- i issue the applicant with a revised suitable skills assessment outcome letter,
- ii update any online skills assessment outcome verification systems with the new outcome, and
- iii consider refunding the appeal fee if no additional evidence was supplied or considered as part of the review process.

Feedback and Complaints

Feedback and complaints are vital to improving the assessment process. They offer applicants a way to voice concerns and contribute to enhancements. They are also a valuable tool when evaluating potential changes to occupational assessment standards.

2.6(EP) Assessing Authorities should have clear policies for handling feedback and complaints including procedures for receiving, documenting, and responding.

Feedback

2.6(EQ) Feedback is commentary on skills assessment services from applicants or other external parties where no action and/or response is expected. This might relate to being satisfied or dissatisfied with the skills assessment process or relate to information found online. Assessing Authorities should use feedback to inform continuous improvement.

Complaints

2.6(ER) Assessing Authorities **must** have a complaint handling policy to address complaints about their operations, decisions, practices, conduct, policies, staff, and third party contracted providers. The policy should:

- i clearly set out the complaints handling procedure, including how to lodge a complaint,
- ii encourage the timely resolution of complaints, including specifying reasonable timeframes for responding to complaint,
- iii refer to the Assessing Authority's obligations and responsibilities under its privacy policy, and
- iv detail the Assessing Authority's commitment to ensuring accountability and fair treatment, ensuring complainants have no fear of repercussions.

2.6(F) Reassessment

- 2.6(FA) Assessing Authorities should offer a reassessment service to accommodate the following scenarios:
- i following an outcome of a skills assessment against a nominated occupation (be it a 'suitable' or 'not suitable' outcome), an applicant is seeking to be re-assessed against a different but similar occupation,
 - ii having received a not suitable outcome against a nominated occupation, the applicant undertakes additional training and/or work experience, and returns to the Assessing Authority within 12 months, seeking to be reassessed, believing they now meet the occupational assessment standards.
- 2.6(FB) Assessing Authorities should consider charging a lower fee than their 'initial' skills assessment fee for this service in recognition of the fact that previously assessed evidence should generally not need to be reassessed.
- 2.6(FC) For clarity in reporting, reassessments should be recorded as a new assessment.

Reassessment procedure

- 2.6(FD) The reassessment procedure should:
- i prescribe the timeframe that applicants have to apply for a reassessment and any requirements for the form and content of their application,
 - ii advise applicants of the cost, ensuring that it is commensurate with the cost of conducting the reassessment, and
 - iii detail how long a reassessment will take to be finalised, ideally within 49 days (7 weeks) from lodgement of the application for reassessment.

2.6(G) Expiry and Renewal

- 2.6(GA) The validity period of a 'suitable' skills assessment outcome may differ between occupations and **must** be determined in consultation with industry. However, at a minimum it should be valid for 12 months.
- 2.6(GB) The Department of Home Affairs will only accept a skills assessment in support of a visa application if that skills assessment outcome was issued within the last 3 years. Accordingly, Assessing Authorities should not issue a skills assessment with a validity period longer than 3 years.
- 2.6(GC) It is not uncommon for applicants to seek a renewal of their skills assessment outcome. Assessing Authorities should provide information on their website outlining:
- i the procedure, cost, and processing time for obtaining a renewal (where offered), and
 - ii an explanation as to why a skills assessment outcome cannot be renewed (where not offered).

Section 3: Sound Business Practice Standards

This section specifies standards relevant to the sound business operations required to carry out the function of an Assessing Authority. Assessing Authorities **must** maintain sound business practices.

3.1 Financial Viability

- 3.1(a) Assessing Authorities **must** be financially viable.
- 3.1(b) The Department conducts a financial and credential assessment when considering applications for approval as an Assessing Authority. Australian Commonwealth, State or Territory Government bodies and agencies regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), or Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) are exempt from this assessment.
- 3.1(c) Assessing Authorities **must** comply with any requests from the Department to review their financial viability through a Financial and Credential Assessment.

3.2 Risk Management

- 3.2(a) Assessing Authorities **must** have a Risk Management Plan to effectively manage and protect their interests and the interests of applicants if risks to its operations arise or are identified. The plan should be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is fit for purpose.
- 3.2(b) The risk management plan should include:
 - i how risks are identified and prioritised,
 - ii how risks are analysed to develop and implement mitigation strategies,
 - iii how risks are recorded, mitigated, monitored, and reviewed,
 - iv mitigation strategies in place for current identified risks,
 - v a Business Continuity Plan and Crisis Management protocols,
 - vi how to manage and respond to fluctuations in demand for skills assessments and a constantly evolving skilled migration landscape,
 - vii the approach to risk management training for staff, and
 - viii how potential risks and mitigations strategies are communicated with internal and external stakeholders.

3.3 Information Governance

- 3.3(a) Assessing Authorities **must** have an information governance framework that details how they create, record, protect, and manage their information assets (records, information, and data). This includes information related to skills assessment applications, assessment results and the basis on which the skills assessment outcome was decided.

- 3.3(b) Assessing Authorities are responsible for seeking their own advice around matters relating to information governance.

3.4 Privacy

- 3.4(a) Assessing Authorities **must** have, and comply with, a privacy policy in relation to information obtained in connection with the provision of skills assessment services, which meets the requirements of the [Privacy Act 1988 \(Privacy Act\)](#)³², including [the Australian Privacy Principles \(APPs\)](#)³³, regardless of whether they are an APP entity. The privacy policy **must**:
- i include reference to the steps taken to protect personal information from misuse, interference and loss, unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure in accordance with APP 11,
 - ii confirm that applicants will be granted access to their own information as required by APP 12, and
 - iii advise that in the event of unauthorised access, or disclosure, of information that would be likely to result in serious harm to any of the individuals to whom the information relates, the affected individual will be notified, as is required by Section 26WL of the Privacy Act.
- 3.4(b) An Assessing Authority **must** ensure that personal information is stored and de-identified and/or destroyed in accordance with any obligations applicable to the Assessing Authority under the [Archives Act 1983](#)³⁴ or the Privacy Act.

3.5 Data Security

- 3.5(a) Assessing Authorities **must** implement transparent data security measures to safeguard applicant information, including encryption protocols, access controls, and data breach notification procedures, promoting trust and confidence in the integrity of the assessment system.
- 3.5(b) Assessing Authorities **must** take steps to protect applicant personal information against misuse, interference, and loss from unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure. More information on potential data security measures can be found at [Data compliance and security](#)³⁵.

3.5(A) Data Breaches

- 3.5(AA) A data breach occurs when personal information held by an Assessing Authority is lost or subjected to unauthorised access or disclosure.

³² Privacy Act 1988 - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A03712/latest/versions>

³³ Australian Privacy Principles (APP) - <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/australian-privacy-principles>

³⁴ Archives Act 1983 - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A02796/latest/text>

³⁵ Data compliance and security - <https://www.naa.gov.au/information-management/build-data-interoperability/interoperability-development-phases/data-governance-and-management/data-compliance-and-security>

- 3.5(AB) Data breaches may be caused by malicious action (by an external or internal party), human error or a failure in information handling or security systems.
- 3.5(AC) Examples of data breaches include, but are not limited to:
- i Unauthorised access,
 - ii An employee accesses personal information where they have no business need,
 - iii Access is obtained by a hacker following a phishing attack,
 - iv Unauthorised disclosure,
 - v An email is sent to the wrong person or includes the wrong attachment,
 - vi Personal information is accidentally published online,
 - vii Loss,
 - viii Hard copies of personal information are stolen, and
 - ix A device containing personal information is accidentally left behind on public transport.
- 3.5(AD) When a data breach occurs that is likely to result in serious harm to an individual whose personal information is involved, Assessing Authorities **must** immediately notify the Department via email at AAPA@dewr.gov.au. The departmental Privacy Officer and Chief Data Officer Office will be notified, and guidance sought around obligations in accordance with the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIIC). Following notification of a data breach to the Department, Assessing Authorities **must**:
- i promptly update the Department in respect of any developments about a notified data breach,
 - ii promptly provide all information and assistance requested by the Department in relation to a notified data breach, and
 - iii comply with any reasonable direction of the Department in relation to the management of a notified data breach.
- 3.5(AE) Assessing Authorities **must** also notify the individual whose personal information has been breached to allow individuals to take steps to reduce their risk of harm, such as by changing their password and being alert to identity fraud or scams.
- 3.5(AF) Assessing Authorities should have a data breach response plan in place, setting out how they will respond to actual or suspected data breaches. The actions taken following a data breach should take into account the following 4 key steps:
- Step 1:** Identify, inform, and contain the data breach to prevent any further compromise of personal information.
- Step2:** Assess the data breach by gathering the facts and evaluating the risks, including potential harm to affected individuals and, where possible, taking action to remediate any risk of harm.
- Step 3:** Notify individuals affected and the Department.
- Step 4:** Review the incident and consider what action can be taken to prevent future breaches.

3.6 Code of Practice

Assessing Authorities should address the following through their organisational governance.

3.6(A) Compliance with Australian Laws

3.6(AA) Assessing Authorities have a responsibility to comply with all applicable Australian laws, including but not limited to the following:

- i [Australia's federal anti-discrimination laws](#)³⁶ contained in the following legislation:
 - [Age Discrimination Act 2004](#)³⁷
 - [Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986](#)³⁸
 - [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)³⁹
 - [Racial Discrimination Act 1975](#)⁴⁰
 - [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#)⁴¹
- ii [Privacy Act 1988 \(Privacy Act\)](#)⁴²
- iii [Criminal Code Act 1995 \(Criminal Code\)](#)⁴³
- iv [Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018 \(FITS Act\)](#)⁴⁴

3.6(AB) In addition, Assessing Authorities may deal with applicants who have a number of risk factors or protective factors to vulnerability or resilience. Assessing Authorities **must** therefore comply with any relevant State and Territory law relating to working with vulnerable people. This may include ensuring employees have either a Working with Vulnerable People check or Working with Children check.

3.6(B) Conflicts of interest

3.6(BA) Assessing Authorities **must** take reasonable steps to disclose and avoid any conflicts of interest, real or apparent, in connection with their duties. Conflicts of interest arise when Assessing Authorities and their employees/agents are, or could be, influenced, or appear to be influenced, by personal interests when doing their job.

3.6(BB) Assessing Authorities **must** have a conflict-of-interest policy, including the process taken if a conflict of interest has been identified, and ensure that all personnel complete a conflict-of-interest declaration.

³⁶ Australia's anti-discrimination law - <https://www.ag.gov.au/rights-and-protections/human-rights-and-anti-discrimination/australias-anti-discrimination-law>

³⁷ Age Discrimination Act 2004 - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A01302/latest/versions>

³⁸ Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A03366/latest/versions>

³⁹ Disability Discrimination Act 1992 - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A04426/latest/text>

⁴⁰ Racial Discrimination Act 1975 - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A00274/latest/text>

⁴¹ Sex Discrimination Act 1984 - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A02868/latest/text>

⁴² Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act) - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A03712/latest/text>

⁴³ Criminal Code Act 1995 (Criminal Code) - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A04868/latest/text>

⁴⁴ Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018 (FITS Act) - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2018A00063/latest/text>

3.6(C) Receiving gifts and benefits

- 3.6(CA) Assessing Authorities **must** uphold high standards of probity and ethical behaviour and receiving gifts and/or benefits can compromise this as they can:
- i be perceived as an attempt to improperly influence an Assessing Authority in their official duties,
 - ii be perceived as a bribe, which is an offence under the Criminal Code, and
 - iii be a conflict of interest of a perceived conflict of interest.
- 3.6(CB) Assessing Authorities should have a Gifts and Benefits policy, including the process taken if the gift and/or benefit was offered, or apparently offered, with the intention of influencing a skills assessment outcome.

3.6(D) Promoting the value of skills assessments

A robust skills assessment process should give employers and industry confidence in migrant workers, however ongoing assurance is still required. Assessing Authorities' expertise in assessing an applicant's qualifications, skills, and experience against Australian industry standards renders them well placed to contribute to providing this assurance.

- 3.6(DA) Assessing Authorities should look for opportunities to lead or participate in ventures that proactively educate employers and industry on the value of skills assessments in verifying skill capabilities, and the benefits of a migrant workforce, including the hiring of vulnerable cohorts.

3.6(E) Post assessment outcome insights

- 3.6(EA) In addition to feedback freely given by applicants or external parties, Assessing Authorities should actively seek feedback about an applicant's visa and employment outcomes post-assessment to inform continuous improvement of skills assessment processes and standards. This could take the form of:
- Surveys or questionnaires,
 - Longitudinal studies, and / or
 - Focus groups
- 3.6(EB) Permission to seek feedback post-assessment **must** be obtained as part of the lodgement process.

3.6(F) Affiliations and partnerships

Industry-wide and sectoral partnerships and affiliations are important for improving processes and service delivery. They present opportunities for information exchange and joint problem solving and increase access to a wider range of skills, knowledge, and specialist services.

3.6(FA) Best practice partnerships and affiliations are ones that are open, responsive, transparent, accountable, informed and collaborative. Partnerships and affiliations **must** comply with the Guide and should not compromise the integrity of the Assessing Authority.

3.7 Quality Assurance

3.7(a) To safeguard the integrity of the skills assessment process and ensure that assessments are fair, unbiased, and conducted consistently across assessors, Assessing Authorities **must** have a quality assurance policy.

3.7(b) This policy may incorporate the quality assurance activities set out in Table 7.

Table 7: Quality Assurance Activities

What	Action
Standard operating procedures	Develop standard operating procedures to support assessors to undertake assessments to a consistent standard. Regularly review and revise in response to issues, feedback, and policy changes.
Recruitment	Ensure appropriately qualified and trained staff are employed to conduct skills assessments.
Training and Professional Development	Provide staff with tailored skills assessment training and ongoing professional development opportunities to maintain quality and consistency in decision making.
Caseload audits	Conduct random caseload audits of finalised and open applications to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ensure consistent interpretations of occupational assessment standards, 2 compliance with record keeping requirements, 3 identify patterns of bias or discrimination, and 4 monitor for fraudulent activity.
Internal audits	Conduct internal audits of processes and systems to identify vulnerabilities that could be exploited by fraudulent actors and take corrective action as needed.
Application integrity	Conduct sample integrity testing on applications by broadening assessment methods to include site visits, practical assessments, client interviews, and other methods to validate claims and information provided.

3.7(c) [Section 4 of the Guide](#) sets out how the Department conducts quality assurance of Assessing Authorities.

3.8 Working with Third Parties

- 3.8(a) Assessing Authorities may choose to nominate a third party to undertake any part(s) of the assessment process. Third parties may be registered training organisations, contractors, or consultants.
- 3.8(b) Third parties **must** enter into a written agreement with the Assessing Authority that, at a minimum:
- i details the nature, extent, and duration of activities the third party is authorised to conduct on behalf of the Assessing Authority,
 - ii explains that all activities undertaken by the third party are undertaken for and on behalf of the Assessing Authority,
 - iii requires the third party to comply with the same conditions, legal and policy requirements, the Guide, and any other requirements that reflect the Assessing Authority's own obligations in undertaking their duties, and
 - iv outlines the information management and protection requirements, including specifying that all records are the property of the Assessing Authority and must be transferred to them on completion of the agreement.

3.8(A) Accountability

- 3.8(AA) The relationship between an Assessing Authority and a third party is one of principal and agent. The Assessing Authority is the principle and is accountable for all of the actions of the third party under the relevant written agreement. An Assessing Authority bears full responsibility for all aspects of the services delivered by the third party under that written agreement, including managing stakeholder relationships, reporting, and adherence to legal requirements and the Guide.
- 3.8(AB) Outsourcing an activity does not mean the risk is outsourced. As such, Assessing Authorities **must** include third party providers in internal quality assurance activities. Where there is non-compliance, Assessing Authorities **must** take corrective action.

3.8(B) Reporting

- 3.8(BA) Assessing Authorities are required to notify the Department via email at AAPA@dewr.gov.au if they enter into or end a third-party agreement, within 14 days of doing so.

Section 4: Assurance Framework

This part of the Guide outlines how the government conducts assurance of Assessing Authorities to ensure their adherence to the Guide and to identify trends, and potential and emerging risks.

This framework guides the assurance approach to improving accountability, transparency, and integrity in the skills assessment sector. It includes the collection and analysis of current, accurate, and reliable skills assessment data to inform evidence-backed policy, quality assurance activities, and ongoing support through facilitating a community of practice within the sector. The framework provides the guardrails that Assessing Authorities should align to; ensuring they remain in line with conditions set upon their approval and remain the most suitable body to undertake skills assessments.

This approach will ensure that government is well informed of issues, trends, and successes within the sector to inform skills assessment policy, resolve issues transparently and consistently, and provide confidence to the Minister that Assessing Authorities are continuing to meet their obligations under this Guide and are complying with conditions set upon their approval.

4.1 Cycle of Assurance

- 4.1(a) Best practice principle 7 states that integrity, security, and transparency in the operations of Assessing Authorities facilitates quality migration outcomes. The quality assurance process which Assessing Authorities are required to engage with can be mapped into a four stage 'Cycle of Assurance' (see diagram below) that incorporates a five-step evaluation cycle, strengthened with three assurance actions – *understanding best practice*, *evidence gathering*, and *provision of advice and feedback*.
- 4.1(b) The Department will support Assessing Authorities through the 'Cycle of Assurance' found at [Appendix 3](#).
- 4.1(c) All assurance activities throughout the cycle of assurance will feed back into an annual review of the Guide, with Assessing Authorities consulted on proposed updates to the Guide prior to endorsement from the Minister.
- 4.1(d) The cycle of assurance will also be used as evidence to indicate that an Assessing Authority is complying with conditions set upon their approval and that they continue to be the most appropriate body to be the Assessing Authority for that occupation(s).
- 4.1(e) The four stages of the 'Cycle of Assurance' are explained in detail below.

4.1(A) Stage 1 - Best Practice Principles and Standards

- 4.1(AA) Section 1 of the Guide outlines the Best Practice Principles and Standards that Assessing Authorities are guided to operate under. They are the central point of reference for both Assessing Authorities and the Department.
- 4.1(AB) Alongside the Guide, internal departmental standard operating procedures provide guidance to the Department on how to assist Assessing Authorities to undertake the assurance activities in the cycle of assurance.
- 4.1(AC) The Guide and internal departmental standard operating procedures will be regularly reviewed and modified where necessary.

4.1(B) Stage 2 - Evidence gathering

- 4.1(BA) Evidence gathering, through the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, is a critical action to understand the operating environment of Assessing Authorities. Evidence gathering determines whether Assessing Authorities are meeting the standards of best practice, continuing to meet the conditions under which they were approved and remain to be the most appropriate Assessing Authority for that occupation(s).
- 4.1(BB) Evidence will come through:
- i mandatory monthly data reporting, as set out under [reporting obligations](#),
 - ii local intelligence obtained from Assessing Authorities and key stakeholders, and
 - iii completion of an [Annual Assurance Review](#) by Assessing Authorities.
- 4.1(BC) Evidence gathered through these activities will inform the best practice rating of Assessing Authorities and any required treatment, advice to the Minister and Assessing Authority sector, and ongoing updates to the Guide.

4.1(C) Stage 3 - Evaluation Lifecycle

- 4.1(CA) Evaluating the degree to which Assessing Authorities are operating in line with the Guide, involves the following 5 steps:
- Step 1:** The Department gathers information through the analysis of Assessing Authority monthly data, local intelligence, and information from the Annual Assurance Review.
- Step 2:** Using information collected in Step 1, the Department conducts a best practice rating assessment using the best practice indicator tool. The tool considers qualitative and quantitative data inputs from the following 3 sources to determine an overall best practice rating for an Assessing Authority and compliance with conditions imposed:
- Monthly data
 - Assessing Authority’s websites
 - Skills assessment processes
- Results will be discussed with the Assessing Authority and amended if required.
- Step 3:** Proportionate to the best practice rating identified in Step 2, the Department will support Assessing Authorities to develop strategies to reduce or eliminate areas of non-conformance with the Guide and conditions are developed into a treatment plan. Treatment plans will only occur where there are unsatisfactory best practice scores.
- Step 4:** Implementation of treatment plan.
- Step 5:** Discuss the effectiveness of the treatment plan with an Assessing Authority, identify opportunities for continuous improvement, and revise treatment plan

and best practice rating assessment accordingly. This will be a continual monitoring and revising exercise over time for effectiveness.

- 4.1(CB) The evaluation lifecycle has the flexibility to adjust to the rapidly evolving skilled migration landscape and will be informed by consultation and feedback from Assessing Authorities through the Department.

4.1(D) Stage 4 - Provision of advice

- 4.1(DA) Throughout this process, the Department will gather feedback, performance data and emerging trends to advise key stakeholders. This includes:

- i feedback to Assessing Authorities - a key responsibility of the Department,
- ii annual and ad-hoc briefings to the Minister, and
- iii publishing an annual 'State of the Service' style report for the Assessing Authority sector.

- 4.1(DB) Advice and feedback are integral to continual improvement efforts across the sector. Further information on sector support is set out in [sector engagement and support](#).

- 4.1(DC) All assurance activities throughout the cycle of assurance will feed back into an annual review of the Guide, with Assessing Authorities consulted on proposed updates to the Guide prior to endorsement from the Minister.

4.2 Managing Risk

Supporting Assessing Authorities through the evaluation lifecycle is key to lifting the quality, timeliness, and outcomes of skills assessments, and effectively responding to fluctuations in assessment demand.

- 4.2(a) The Department will use a risk assessment approach to managing assurance activities proportionate to the best practice rating of Assessing Authorities. The Department will support Assessing Authorities through the evaluation lifecycle to ensure that evidence gathered is managed in a systematic, consistent, and transparent manner. This enables Departmental resources to be better utilised by focussing efforts in the areas of most need.
- 4.2(b) The Department will take an educative approach with Assessing Authorities, openly engaging with them to identify, analyse, and respond to non-conformance at levels proportionate to potential and emerging issues.

4.3 Assigning a best practice rating

- 4.3(a) Using a best practice indicator tool, the Department enters qualitative and quantitative data inputs into three domains (Data, Website and Skills Assessment Processes) to collectively determine the overall best practice rating for an Assessing Authority.
- 4.3(b) The following best practice ratings can be assigned:
 - i Best Practice
 - ii Satisfactory
 - iii Unsatisfactory
 - iv Critical Concern
- 4.3(c) Best Practice Ratings are for internal use only, to guide and inform assurance efforts and will not be published.

4.4 Treatment of non-conformance

- 4.4(a) An Assessing Authority's overall best practice rating, coupled with the number of unsatisfactory scores in each of the three domains of Data, Website and Skills Assessment Processes, will determine both their reporting frequency and if they require a Treatment Plan.
- 4.4(b) The Treatment Plan sets out remedial action required by an Assessing Authority to ensure adherence to best practice principles and standards in accordance with the Guide. It also seeks the Assessing Authority's agreement to the plan. Based on the best practice rating results, an Assessing Authority may not require a Treatment Plan.
- 4.4(c) This approach considers the nature of the behaviour being observed and makes recommendations to prevent, detect and respond to incidents of non-conformance with the Guide.

- 4.4(d) Post-implementation of a Treatment Plan, the Department will consult with Assessing Authorities at prescribed intervals to review progress and determine effectiveness of the plan. As part of this process, revised remediation strategies, timeframes, reporting obligations and agreement from Assessing Authorities may be required based on evidentiary data provided to support claims of improvements made towards best practice.
- 4.4(e) Where an Assessing Authority continues to receive ratings of Unsatisfactory or Critical Concerns, despite best efforts to improve through treatment plans, the Department will commence analysis of revocation options.

4.5 Reporting frequency and review

- 4.5(a) Assessing Authorities’ reporting obligations and the frequency upon which they will be reviewed are determined according to their overall best practice rating. Additionally, ad-hoc intelligence could prompt a review outside of the regular cycle. This is explained in Table 8.

Table 8: Reporting Frequency and Best Practice Review

Category	Description	Departmental contact	Reporting Obligations	Review period
Best Practice	The likelihood of an event occurring is very low. The impact on individuals and Assessing Authorities will be minimal. Despite an overall classification of Best Practice, there may still be areas that could be improved upon where possible.	At least once per year	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 annual meeting with the Department. 2 annual assurance review reporting. 3 monthly data reporting. 	Annually
Satisfactory	The likelihood of an event occurring is low, or, if there is a higher likelihood, the impact if it does occur will not be severe. Despite an overall classification of Satisfactory, there are still areas that require more active management and planning to improve.	At least two (2) times per year	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 biannual meetings with the Department. 2 annual assurance review reporting. 3 monthly data reporting. 4 verbal updates covering progress against treatment plans with evidentiary data (where applicable) and/or progress towards best practice. 	6 Monthly
Unsatisfactory	Events impacting individuals or Assessing Authorities are likely to occur, or the impact if they do occur will be severe. The identified areas require immediate attention and robust strategies to work toward best practice.	At least one (1) contact every three (3) months	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 quarterly meetings with the Department. 2 annual assurance review reporting. 3 monthly data reporting. 4 written updates for treatment plans with evidentiary data. 	Quarterly
Critical Concerns	Events that would impact individuals or Assessing Authorities are almost certain to occur, or the impact if they do occur will be extremely severe or catastrophic. These areas require urgent, comprehensive attention and robust strategies to improve performance.	At least monthly	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 monthly meetings with the Department. 2 annual assurance review reporting. 3 monthly data reporting. 4 written updates for treatment plans with evidentiary data. 5 potential revocation analysis. 	Monthly

4.6 Reporting obligations

4.6(a) To support evidence-backed policy, transparency in operations, and a commitment to best practice, Assessing Authorities **must** provide information according to parameters and in the format specified by the Department. This includes:

4.6(A) Regular skills assessment data reporting

De-identified skills assessment data enables Government to identify risks, trends and opportunities to ensure the quality, timeliness, and integrity of the skills assessment sector. Data reported by Assessing Authorities is critical for assurance activities and to inform long term policy development.

- 4.6(AA) Assessing Authorities **must** provide relevant skills assessment data in a format specified by the Department on a minimum of a monthly basis.
- 4.6(AB) By providing data to the Department, Assessing Authorities are agreeing to the conditions set out in the Privacy Statement below.

Privacy Statement

Collection and use of reported data

The Department uses data collected from Assessing Authorities (Collected Data) for monitoring purposes, to inform policy and assurance activities for the skills assessment sector, and to improve understanding and transparency of the sector. In certain instances, the Department may share Collected Data with relevant stakeholders and/or the public to further these purposes.

For example, the Department may:

- 1 use Collected Data to develop graphs and figures, which may be made publicly available on the Department's website or other relevant platforms; and
- 2 share Collected Data with relevant stakeholders, such as industry bodies, researchers, or government agencies, to inform broader policy discussions concerning the skills assessment sector.

Anonymising Collected Data shared with the public

If sharing Collected Data publicly, the Department will take all reasonable steps to ensure the anonymity of individual Assessing Authorities. This includes that the Department:

- 1 will only report data in an aggregated format, such that individual authority data will not be identifiable; and
- 2 may modify or remove specific data points to further protect individual authority identification.

4.6(B) Ad-hoc data and/or information requests

- 4.6(BA) The Department may from time to time make requests for any data or information outside of the monthly reporting period. Assessing Authorities **must** use all reasonable endeavours to comply with those requests.

4.6(C) Annual Assurance Review

- 4.6(CA) The Annual Assurance Review will be a written report completed by all Assessing Authorities each year, to provide qualitative caseload data, which is not captured in the monthly quantitative data reports. A template for this report will be provided to Assessing Authorities, with the report covering the previous financial year, and including information on the following areas:

- i success stories (including what is working well and why),
- ii stakeholder engagement efforts,
- iii changes to fees,
- iv trends,
- v issues, and
- vi process improvements.

4.7 Sector engagement and support

- 4.7(a) The Department will provide guidance, information, and support to Assessing Authorities. Through engagement and support initiatives, the Department:

- i ensures timely and accurate internal and external communications,
- ii provides clarity and support in understanding and adhering to the Guide,
- iii creates a dialogue and shares knowledge among relevant stakeholders, and
- iv facilitates training opportunities.

- 4.7(b) Such initiatives include:

- i Collaboratively working to support Assessing Authorities in their obligations as outlined in the Guide and be the first point of contact for stakeholders in relation to matters about a specific Assessing Authority,
- ii **Bulletins** that provide news and updates to Assessing Authorities relevant to the skills assessment space,
- iii **Workshops** that are a platform for participants to share their mutual experiences and discuss topical issues relevant to the sector. Workshops are also a forum to advise on governance matters, skills assessment data, and government priorities, with key stakeholders invited on occasion to share information and field questions from participants, and
- iv **Training** to build the capacity and understanding of the legal frameworks in which Assessing Authorities work, e.g. fraud awareness, immigration policy, etc.

The Department welcomes suggestions from Assessing Authorities for training and topics for discussion.

4.8 Revocation of specified Assessing Authority

4.8(A) Revocation of approval

- 4.8(a) Under sub-regulation 2.26B(1BG) of the [Migration Regulations 1994](#)⁴⁵ the Skills Assessment Minister may revoke an Assessing Authority's approval for an occupation if the Minister:
- i is no longer satisfied that the person or body is suitable to be so approved; or
 - ii is satisfied that the person or body has breached a condition imposed on the approval; or
 - iii is satisfied that another person or body is more suitable to be approved as the assessing authority for the occupation and one or more of those countries.
- 4.8(b) Sub-regulation 2.26B (1BH) of the [Migration Regulations 1994](#)⁴⁴ states that before the Skills Assessment Minister revokes the approval of a person or body under subregulation (1BG), the Minister **must** consult the Immigration Minister.
- 4.8(c) Under sub-regulation (1BI) of the [Migration Regulations 1994](#)⁴⁴, the Skills Assessment Minister must, as soon as practicable after revoking the approval of a person or body under subregulation (1BG):
- (1) give the person or body a written notice that sets out:
 - a) the decision; and
 - b) the reasons for the decision; and
 - c) the day that the revocation takes effect; and
 - (2) **give a copy of the notice to the Immigration Minister.**
- 4.8(d) Subregulation 2.26B(1BJ) of the [Migration Regulations 1994](#)⁴⁴ operates to clarify that if the approval of an Assessing Authority is revoked by the Skills Assessment Minister under subregulation 2.26B(1BG), the revocation does not affect an assessment of the skills of an individual that was completed by the Assessing Authority before the day the revocation takes effect.

4.8(B) Review of decisions

- 4.8(a) In circumstances where the Skills Assessment Minister has revoked the approval of an Assessing Authority for an occupation, the Assessing Authority has the right to reconsideration of the decision by the Minister and - subsequently - ART review.
- 4.8(b) Part 4A of the [Migration Regulations 1994](#)⁴⁴ stipulates the review of the decisions process as follows:

⁴⁵ Migration Regulations 1994 - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L01650/latest/text>

4.41 Reconsideration of a revocation decision

(1) A person or body (the *aggrieved entity*) whose interests are affected by a revocation decision may request the Skills Assessment Minister to reconsider the decision.

Form and timing of request

(2) The request must:

(a) be in writing; and

(b) set out the reasons for the request; and

(c) be made within:

(i) 30 days after the day the aggrieved entity is notified of the revocation decision; or

(ii) if the Skills Assessment Minister allows a longer period (whether before or after the end of the 30-day period referred to in subparagraph (i))—that longer period.

Reconsideration of decision

(3) On receiving a request made in accordance with subregulation (2), the Skills Assessment Minister:

(a) must review the revocation decision; and

(b) must affirm, vary or set aside the revocation decision; and

(c) if the Skills Assessment Minister sets aside the revocation decision—may make such other decision as the Skills Assessment Minister thinks appropriate.

(4) The Skills Assessment Minister must do so before the end of:

(a) the period of 30 days beginning on the day the Skills Assessment Minister receives the request, unless paragraph (b) applies; or

(b) if the aggrieved entity and the Skills Assessment Minister agree on a longer period—that longer period.

Notice of decision on reconsideration

(5) The Skills Assessment Minister must give the aggrieved entity written notice of the Skills Assessment Minister's decision on reconsideration and of the reasons for that decision.

(6) The Skills Assessment Minister must give the Minister a copy of the notice.

When decision on reconsideration takes effect

(7) The Skills Assessment Minister's decision on reconsideration takes effect:

(a) on the day specified in the notice; or

(b) if a day is not specified—on the day on which that decision is made.

Skills Assessment Minister may be taken to have affirmed decision

- (8) The Skills Assessment Minister is taken to have made a decision affirming the revocation decision under reconsideration if the Skills Assessment Minister has not notified the aggrieved entity of the Skills Assessment Minister's decision on reconsideration before the end of the period applicable under subregulation (4).

4.42 Reconsideration of revocation decision on own initiative

- (1) The Skills Assessment Minister may reconsider a revocation decision if satisfied that there is sufficient reason to do so.
- (2) If the Skills Assessment Minister decides under subsection (1) to reconsider a revocation decision, the Skills Assessment Minister must, within 14 days after commencing reconsideration of the revocation decision, give the person or body (the interested entity) whose interests are affected by the decision written notice that:
- (a) states that the decision is being reconsidered; and
 - (b) specifies the day the reconsideration commenced.
- (3) After reconsidering the revocation decision, the Skills Assessment Minister:
- (a) must affirm, vary or set aside the revocation decision; and
 - (b) if the Skills Assessment Minister sets aside the revocation decision—may make such other decision as the Skills Assessment Minister thinks appropriate.
- (4) The Skills Assessment Minister must, as soon as practicable after making the reconsideration decision:
- (a) give the interested entity written notice of the Skills Assessment Minister's decision; and
 - (b) give the Minister a copy of the notice.

4.43 ART review of decisions

Applications may be made to the ART for review of the following decisions:

- (a) a decision under subregulation 4.41(3) that is made by the Skills Assessment Minister;
 - (b) a decision under subregulation 4.41(8) that is taken to have been made by the Skills Assessment Minister;
 - (c) a decision under subregulation 4.42(3) that is made by the Skills Assessment Minister.
- 4.8(c) When revocation occurs, a new Assessing Authority for an occupation will be specified in a legislative instrument. The new Assessing Authority cannot undertake skills assessments for that occupation until the relevant legislative instrument has been updated and commenced as stipulated by the date of commencement in the instrument.

- 4.8(d) On a case-by-case basis, and with written approval, the Department of Home Affairs will continue to accept skills assessments issued by the revoked Assessing Authority after the revocation has taken effect, providing the skills assessment application was lodged prior to the revocation taking effect. The lodgement date **must** be included on the skills assessment outcome letter as evidence in this circumstance.

Glossary

Term	Definition for terms used in the Guide
ANZSCO	<p>The ANZSCO is a skill-based classification used by Australia and New Zealand to categorise occupations. It consists of five hierarchical levels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. major group, 2. sub-major group, 3. minor group, 4. unit group, and 5. occupation. <p>Skills assessments are conducted at the occupation level with applicants nominating which ANZSCO coded occupation they want to be assessed against. ANZSCO Unit Groups are a list of similar or closely related occupations. The ANZSCO unit group code is the first 4 digits of the ANZSCO occupation code (e.g. 252311 Dental Specialist and 252312 Dentist, both fall into the 2523 Dental Practitioners unit group).</p> <p>Note: On 6 December 2024, the Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA) replaced ANZSCO. At the time of writing, some (but not all) skilled visa subclasses have transitioned to OSCA.</p> <p>For the purposes of this Guide, the term ANZSCO is used interchangeably with OSCA and refers to the coded occupation that the Assessing Authority is specifically approved to assess under the <i>Migration Regulations 1994</i>.</p>
Applicant	An applicant is a person who is applying for a skills assessment.
ART	Administrative Review Tribunal
Assessment	The process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard required in the workplace.
Assessors	Persons who assess a migrant’s skills assessment application against Australian industry standards.
Assessing Authority	<p>A person or body specified as the ‘Relevant assessing authority’ by the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in respect to skilled occupation(s) under the <i>Migration Regulations 1994</i> to conduct skills assessments for migration purposes.</p> <p>Also referred to as Skilled Migration Assessing Authority and Relevant Assessing Authority.</p>

Term	Definition for terms used in the Guide
Australian Qualifications Framework	The national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.
Best Practice Principles and Standards	The principles and standards detailed in ' Best Practice Principles and Standards for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities ' ⁴⁶ which Assessing Authorities are required to act in accordance with.
Biometric Information	Biometric information means information about any measurable biological or behavioural characteristics of an individual that can be used to identify the individual or verify the identity of the individual, such as face, fingerprints, and voice.
Bogus documents	A document that the Minister reasonably suspects is a document that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 purports to have been, but was not, issued in respect of the person, or 2 is counterfeit or has been altered by a person who does not have authority to do so, or 3 was obtained because of a false or misleading statement, whether or not made knowingly.
Certified copy	A certified copy is a copy of an original document that has been confirmed to be a true copy of the document by an authorised person.
Comparable	Preferred word to 'equivalent'. Used in the context of determining the comparability of an applicant's overseas qualification to the Australian Qualifications Framework.
Conflicts of interest	The term 'personal interests' refers to interests broader than just those of an individual. It may also refer to the interests of someone's family, friends, workplace or other organisations they are involved with.
CRICOS	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students. A list of all Australian education providers that offer courses to people studying in Australia on student visas and the courses offered.
Department	The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.
Employer	A person or organisation that employs people and pays them.
External Appeal	External appeals are when an applicant is disputing an unsuccessful internal review of their 'not suitable' outcome.
False and misleading	Information that is false or misleading means information that is false or misrepresenting of the truth.

⁴⁶ Best Practice Principles and Standards - <https://www.dewr.gov.au/assessing-authority-policy-and-assurance/resources/guiding-principles-and-standards-skilled-migration-assessing-authorities-guide>

Term	Definition for terms used in the Guide
Gifts and Benefits	Gifts and benefits are defined as any item of value, including goods, property, money, travel, entertainment, services, or hospitality received in the course of their work as an Assessing Authority.
Governments	The political system by which a country, or community, is administered and regulated. May include: the Australian Government (Commonwealth), State and Territory governments, and local governments.
Home Affairs	The Australian Government agency responsible for Immigration. Also known as 'The Department of Home Affairs'.
Immigration Minister	The Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.
Industry	Includes peak organisations representing small to large businesses, industries, employers and unions.
Internal Review	Internal reviews are when an applicant is disputing a 'not suitable' outcome of their primary skills assessment.
Migration Regulations	The Migration Regulations 1994.
Minister	The Minister for Skills and Training (also known as the 'Skills Assessment Minister').
Privacy Act	The Privacy Act 1988.
Skilled Occupation List	The list summarising the occupations Australia needs to fill skill shortages, and for which certain skilled visa subclasses may be available. Also known as the Skilled Migration Occupation List.
Skills Assessment	An assessment of a prospective migrant's skills, experience and qualifications to ensure they meet Australian standards to work in the nominated occupation in Australia. They are conducted by relevant skills assessing authorities for the purposes of migration.
Third Party	Registered training organisations, contractors, or consultants engaged to assist with determining whether an applicant meets identity and/or occupation assessment standards.
Unique Reference Number	A unique number assigned to an Applicant in relation to a validly lodged application for a skills assessment.

Appendix 1 - Recommended suitable outcome letter format

Assessing Authority Letterhead

Photo of applicant (if able)

Full name of applicant

Known aliases

Date of birth

Date of issue	<i>The date the outcome was issued</i>
Assessing Authority	<i>Name of Assessing Authority</i>
Reference number	<i>A unique identifier for the outcome letter</i>
Nominated Occupation	<i>Name and ANZSCO code</i>
Outcome	<i>Suitable / Not Suitable including if outcome is specific to a visa subclass</i>
Validity period	<i>How long skills assessment is valid for or N/A</i>

Dear (applicant)

Thank you for your application. Your application has been assessed as **suitable** in the occupation of (insert occupation & ANZSCO code).

This outcome was reached based on the following:

Qualifications (delete if not applicable)

Detail applicant's qualification(s) and what they are comparable to in the Australian Qualifications Framework. Ensure the following is included:

- 1 Name of the qualification
- 2 Name of the institution that awarded the qualification
- 3 Date qualification was awarded

Skills and professional experience (delete if not applicable)

Detail applicant's skills and professional experience. Ensure the following work experience details are included:

- 1 Name of employer
- 2 Country of employment
- 3 Start and end dates of employment
- 4 Position(s) held

English language proficiency (delete if not applicable)

Detail the English language proficiency requirements and how the applicant met them (name the test and scores or describe how English proficiency was satisfied).

Next steps

- 1 This outcome letter can be presented to the Department of Home Affairs to support a visa application. It may also be useful in job seeking efforts in Australia as evidence of your qualifications, skills, and experience.
- 2 Once the stated validity period of the skills assessment expires, you are:
 - i able to renew your outcome by referring to the renewal process here (insert link or describe the process), or
 - ii lodge a new skills assessment application to obtain a new outcome.
- 3 **(where applicable)** If you would like to be assessed against a different occupation(s) that is similar to your nominated occupation for which we are the relevant Assessing Authority, you may apply for a reassessment by referring to the reassessment process here (insert link or describe the process)
- 4 There is a requirement that you are registered/licenced/accredited to (insert peak body/professional membership) prior to undertaking work in (insert occupation) in Australia. Further details on membership/accreditation/licencing can be found here: (insert link).
- 5 To work in Australia, you will be required to undertake 'gap training' to satisfy Australian industry standards and competencies. This includes XXXXX (insert educational/training/skill gaps). Information on gap training can be found at www.yourcareer.gov.au for vocational education and www.courseseecker.edu.au for higher education. These sites also provide useful information for ongoing professional development throughout your career in Australia.
- 6 For up-to-date information on seeking and retaining employment in Australia, please refer to employability information found here (insert link and ensure it covers job searching, professionally memberships, industry connections, relevant unions, internships and work placements, etc. An information pack could also be provided).

If you have any further questions on your application or next steps, please contact: (insert contact).

Appendix 2 - Recommended not suitable outcome letter format

Assessing Authority Letterhead

Photo of applicant (if able)

Full name of applicant

Known aliases

Date of birth

Date of issue	<i>The date the outcome was issued</i>
Assessing Authority	<i>Name of Assessing Authority</i>
Reference number	<i>A unique identifier for the outcome letter</i>
Nominated Occupation	<i>Name and ANZSCO code</i>
Outcome	<i>Suitable / Not Suitable including if outcome is specific to a visa subclass</i>
Validity period	<i>How long skills assessment is valid for or N/A</i>

Dear (applicant)

Thank you for your application. Your application has been assessed as **not suitable** in the occupation of (insert occupation & ANZSCO code).

Outline the reasons for receiving a ‘not suitable’ outcome. This can be done by:

- 1 embedding the reason in the outcome letter, or
- 2 attaching a decision record that outlines why the applicant has not met the identity requirements and/or the occupational assessment standards for the nominated occupation.

For a ‘not suitable’ outcome given in circumstances where fraud is detected or strongly suspected, the following must be included in the reasoning for the decision:

- 1 description of the fraud (e.g. provision of bogus documents and why they are considered bogus, identification of false or misleading information and why it is considered to be false or misleading, etc)
- 2 any information provided by the applicant in response to the suggestion of fraud affecting their application (their response to an invitation to comment under Natural Justice)
- 3 the impact of the fraud on the skills assessment outcome, including any consequences for future applications.

Next steps

- 1 If you disagree with the outcome of your skills assessment, you can seek a review of the decision. You have XX days to lodge a review. Information on the review and appeals process can be found here (insert link or describe the process).

- 2 **(where applicable)** If you would like to be assessed against a different occupation(s) that is similar to your nominated occupation and we are the appointed Assessing Authority, you may apply for a reassessment by referring to the reassessment process here (insert link or describe the process).
- 3 We identified areas where you require further studies, training, or experience to satisfy Australian industry standards and competencies. This includes XXXXX (insert educational/training/skill gaps). If you would like to address these skill gaps and pursue additional studies, training, or education, we encourage you to visit www.yourcareer.gov.au for vocational education and training information or www.courseseecker.edu.au for higher education information.
 - i **(where applicable)** Once additional competencies have been achieved, you may be eligible to apply for a reassessment of your application to incorporate this. Information about the reassessment process can be found here (insert link or describe the process).

Thank you for the time you have taken to prepare and lodge your application. We understand that the outcome may not have been what you have expected. If you have any further questions on your application or next steps, please contact: (insert contact).

Appendix 3 - Cycle of Assurance

