



Australian Government
Department of Employment
and Workplace Relations

Guidelines for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities

ISBN

XXX-X-XXX-XXXXX-X [PRINT]

XXX-X-XXX-XXXXX-X [PDF]

XXX-X-XXX-XXXXX-X [DOCX]



With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the Department's logo, any material protected by a trade mark and where otherwise noted all material presented in this document is provided under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) licence.

The details of the relevant licence conditions are available on the Creative Commons website (accessible using the links provided) as is the full legal code for the [CC BY 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>)

The document must be attributed as the *Guidelines for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities*.

Contents

Overview	4
Guidelines for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities	4
PART ONE: Applying for assessing authority approval.....	5
1. Application process.....	5
2. Roles and responsibilities	6
3. Approval Criteria.....	7
Criterion 1 – Eligibility.....	7
Criterion 2 – Sound business practice	7
Criterion 3 – Skills assessment process	9
Part Two: Retaining assessing authority approval	13
4. Unreasonable barriers.....	13
5. Risk management	14
6. Monitoring	17
7. Support	18

Overview

Australia's skilled migration program contributes to Australia's economic and workforce needs in skill areas identified by the Australian Government. The program requires prospective migrants to undergo an assessment of their skills, qualifications and/or work experience to ensure they meet the occupational assessment standards needed for employment in Australia.

Assessing authorities approved by the Government conduct assessments to ensure that a potential migrant's skills meet the industry standards required to work in a relevant occupation, with outcomes used to inform the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs) on skilled migration visas.

The Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, referred to as the 'Skills Assessment Minister' under Regulation 2.26B of the *Migration Regulations 1994*, is responsible for approving assessing authorities. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the Department) supports the Minister and provides governance of assessing authorities.

Guidelines for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities

The purpose of the *Guidelines for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities* (Guidelines) is to outline the policy and procedure framework for organisations seeking to become assessing authorities and manage ongoing compliance.

In addition, it aims to:

- explain the criteria to be considered and the process to be followed by organisations wishing to be approved as assessing authorities for an occupation
- assist assessing authorities to continue to meet the conditions under which they were approved
- advise assessing authorities of changes to policy or process.

The Guidelines are available on the Department's website www.dewr.gov.au and with a link on the Home Affairs website.

The Guidelines are subject to review by the Department.

PART ONE: Applying for assessing authority approval

This part sets out the criteria that an organisation must meet to be approved as an assessing authority.

1. Application process

Organisations seeking to become an assessing authority may apply to the Department. In addition, either Home Affairs or the Department may identify an organisation as a prospective assessing authority for a nominated occupation and request an organisation submit an application.

Notwithstanding historical precedent, only one assessing authority per occupation will be approved except in extraordinary circumstances.

The Department considers all requests in consultation with relevant institutions and makes a recommendation to the Skills Assessment Minister (the Minister).

If the Minister approves an organisation, the Minister will then advise the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs (Minister for Immigration) and request that a legislative instrument naming the assessing authority be made. The Department and Home Affairs list the approved assessing authority on their websites and the organisation is then eligible to undertake skills assessments.

In circumstances where an assessing authority does not continue to meet the conditions under which it was approved, the Skills Assessment Minister may revoke the assessing authority's approval by virtue of subsection 33(3) of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1901*.

2. Roles and responsibilities

The table below identifies the roles and responsibilities for entities connected to skills assessments and governance arrangements.

Entity	Responsibilities
Assessing Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a skills assessment service to prospective migrants aligned with Australian Government skills recognition policies and Guidelines • Adhere to the Guidelines and ongoing compliance requirements • Work effectively with the Australian Government, including through participating in monitoring and support arrangements
Assessing Authorities Quality Assurance (AAQA) function within the Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess organisations against the approval criteria based on evidence provided • Recommend organisations to the Minister for approval • Monitor assessing authorities and make recommendations to the Minister accordingly • Provide skills recognition policy advice to assessing authorities • Liaise with Home Affairs and other Australian Government agencies • Ensure demonstration of Australia's international obligations in skills recognition
Home Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the Minister for Immigration's specification of organisations through the relevant legislative instrument • Provide migration policy advice to assessing authorities, government agencies and other stakeholders
Minister for Immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify organisations as assessing authorities
Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An entity applying for assessing authority approval
Skills Assessment Minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve organisations as assessing authorities • Notify the Minister for Immigration of approval of organisations as assessing authorities and requesting their specification • Revoke approval of organisations as assessing authorities

3. Approval Criteria

The approval criteria provide a framework for the approval of an organisation as an assessing authority. The criteria align with Australian Government skills recognition policy, which includes outcomes-based approaches to skills recognition, the principles of comparability, and the elimination of barriers to recognition.

The approval criteria also align with Australia's international obligations as a Party to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization qualifications recognition conventions.

Criterion 1 – Eligibility

An organisation must demonstrate its eligibility to be considered as an assessing authority.

1.1. Eligible organisation

To meet this criterion, the organisation should be described as one or more of the following:

1.1.1. Government Body – an Australian Commonwealth, state or territory government organisation or body.

1.1.2. Peak Professional Body – a leading body nationally accepted as a legitimate “voice” or representative of a profession or industry.

1.1.3. Regulatory Body – a body that formally accredits, approves and recognises training. The body that sets standards for, and regulates, entry into trades and professions.

1.1.4. Accreditation Authority – a non-government organisation or an organisation supported by a government body, that grants or withholds accreditation in accordance with its standards.

Criterion 2 – Sound business practice

An organisation must demonstrate that it can reasonably expect to carry out the functions of an assessing authority including demonstrating financial viability, appropriate risk management and information management in alignment with sound business practice.

2.1. Financial viability

If the organisation is an Australian Government entity or a non-government agency that is registered with Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) or Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), it does not need to complete this criterion.

Please go to **Section 2.2**.

If the organisation is a non-government agency that has been operating for more than one year, the organisation will be requested to provide audited General-Purpose Financial Statements for the most recent three complete financial years.

If the organisation has been operating for less than one financial year, it will be requested to provide a projected operating budget for the current and next financial year that has been certified by a member of the accounting profession.

2.2. Risk management

The organisation must have a risk management plan for identifying and managing identity and document fraud. Organisations should have regard to [Section 5 – Risk management](#) of the Guidelines when addressing this criterion.

The organisation will be required to provide:

1. a copy of its process for identifying and evaluating possible identity and/or document fraud in skills assessment applications
2. confirmation of training offered on risk and fraud for officers processing skills assessment applications.

The organisation is required to provide a copy of its risk management plan.

2.3. Records management

The organisation should have records management policies and processes that ensure accurate data collection of skills assessment applications, assessment results and the basis on which the assessment result was decided.

The organisation is required to provide a copy of its records management policy and process.

2.4. Privacy

The organisation must have a privacy policy regarding skilled migration applications that meets the requirements of the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and [Australian Privacy Principles](#) (APP). In its privacy policy, the organisation should:

- 2.4.1. 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
- 2.4.2. confirm that prospective migrants will be granted access to their own information as required by APP 12, and
- 2.4.3. 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 1988*.

The organisation is required to provide a copy of its privacy policy.

Criterion 3 – Skills assessment process

An organisation must demonstrate that its skills assessment process is clear, transparent and user-friendly, with an appropriate review and appeals process.

3.1. Provision of information

The organisation will be required to provide draft copies of the information it intends to provide for applicants.

An organisation should ensure information to skills assessment applicants is in plain English that:

3.1.1. explains the skills assessment process, including:

- assessment standards
- assessment methodology
- application requirements
- assessment fees, and
- review and appeals process.

3.1.2. is detailed enough to allow prospective migrants to understand the likelihood of a positive outcome before making an application, and

3.1.3. includes contact details relating to registration, licensing, and membership of professional organisations and employment for suitable applicants.

3.2. Occupational assessment standards

Occupation-specific organisations are those responsible for establishing and/or applying nationally recognised standards for the occupation they propose to assess. This can be through either licensing/registration or the accreditation of Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications required for employment in Australia. Applicants should be issued with a skills assessment outcome that clearly states the suitability of their skills for migration purposes for the nominated occupation.

Under Regulation 2.26B of the [*Migration Regulations 1994*](#), an assessing authority must set occupational assessment standards against which the skills of a prospective migrant are assessed. This may vary depending on the type of visa.

Occupational assessment standards should not go beyond what is required for registration or licensing with respect to an occupation. They should be fair, sensible and relevant. If requested, assessing authorities should provide information about their standards, skills assessments, stakeholder consultation and complaints handling processes. This is to ensure that the process by which assessment standards are applied remains transparent, reliable, fair and non-discriminatory.

The process by which the assessment standards are applied should be flexible enough to allow an applicant to meet the standards through a variety of pathways. It should deliver positive outcomes for prospective migrants with Australian qualifications accredited for entry to the nominated occupation.

In addition, it is the responsibility of assessing authorities to demonstrate how they will liaise with relevant organisations on an ongoing basis to ensure streamlined recognition in the occupation, particularly if skills recognition decisions for migration and employment are made by different organisations.

An organisation must demonstrate that its proposed occupational assessment standards:

3.2.1. can be met through skills, qualifications and/or work experience

3.2.2. are limited to skills, qualifications and/or work experience relevant to the nominated occupation

3.2.3. are equivalent to an Australian workplace for employment in the nominated occupation

3.2.4. are based on:

- nationally recognised standards for licensing/ registration in the nominated occupation, and/or
- an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification required for employment in the nominated occupation

When completing the Skilled Migration Assessing Authority Application Form the organisation is required to provide a copy of the assessment standards for each occupation.

3.3. Skills assessment application form declaration

The organisation must demonstrate that its skills assessment application form includes a declaration to the effect that the skilled migration applicant:

3.3.1. understands the purpose of the application

3.3.2. has supplied information about themselves and understands the penalties for providing false and/or misleading information

3.3.3. agrees to the release of his or her personal information in certain circumstances, and

3.3.4. understands that reasonable enquiries relevant to his or her application may be made.

3.4. Skills assessments

The organisation should demonstrate its skills assessments:

- 3.4.1.** establish the comparability of an overseas qualification(s) in terms of AQF qualification types
- 3.4.2.** are transparent, coherent, reliable, fair and non-discriminatory
- 3.4.3.** allow for applicants to correct errors or omissions in their applications
- 3.4.4.** are not unreasonable in terms of the type, format or certification of documents required
- 3.4.5.** in the case of exams, are available at appropriate intervals throughout the year and in a range of geographic locations and costs are reasonable, and
- 3.4.6.** do not impose unreasonable barriers for recognition

The organisation is required to provide its policy and process for assessing skills assessment applications.

3.5. Review and appeal procedure

To ensure the probity of the decision-making process, an assessing authority must have procedures for an internal review and external appeal for skills assessment applicants on matters relating to their assessment.

3.5.1. Internal review

An internal review process involves a more senior officer within the assessing authority, who was not involved in processing the original application, reviewing the original skills assessment decision to ensure that no errors have been made in the skills assessment or administration of the application. An applicant requesting a review of a decision may provide new evidence. However, where an applicant for a review submits new evidence that causes the original decision to be overturned, the assessing authority has the discretion not to refund the review fee.

The internal review procedure should clearly set out the procedure for requesting a review of an assessment outcome. The procedure should:

- advise that a request for an internal review of a decision should be received within a reasonable timeframe of the decision being made
- advise that the assessing authority will make a review decision within a reasonable timeframe
- explain the review will be undertaken by a more senior officer within the assessing authority who was not involved in the original decision, and
- advise that a written notice of a review decision outcome will be given to the applicant, with the notice to include:
 - the reasons for the decision
 - advice about how to appeal the decision, and

- feedback to unsuccessful applicants on how their skills assessment outcome was determined and what options are now open to them.

If the review identifies that an error has been made that affects the skills assessment decision, the applicant should be issued a revised skills assessment outcome.

Charging an applicant for an internal review may constitute an unreasonable barrier. For clarification on what may constitute an unreasonable barrier, please refer to [**Section 4 – Unreasonable barriers**](#).

3.5.2. External appeal

An external appeal process involves an independent assessor or advisory re-assessing the application. The independent assessor should have expertise in the nominated occupation, for example through being a practitioner, academic or regulatory/professional body representative, whose primary role is not with the assessing authority.

The external appeal procedure should clearly set out the process for requesting an appeal of an internal review outcome. The procedure should:

- explain the process for making an appeal
- advise the applicant that each party to the appeal may be accompanied or assisted by another person at the applicant's cost, and
- advise the applicant that the independent assessor will provide a written notice of the appeal decision that includes the reasons for an unfavourable decision, if applicable.

The organisation is required to provide a copy of its review and appeal procedures.

Part Two: Retaining assessing authority approval

This part of the Guidelines provides information for approved assessing authorities to assist them in meeting ongoing approval requirements.

4. Unreasonable barriers

The skilled stream of Australia's migration program is designed to attract migrants who can make a significant contribution to the Australian economy and fill positions where Australian workers are unavailable.

The skilled stream also plays an important role in regional development through providing skills and expertise that cannot be sourced locally, as well as encouraging investment and promoting local spending in regional areas.

Assessing authorities must not impose unreasonable barriers on, or act in an opportunistic way with, potential migrants that may compromise the skilled stream of the migration program. Demands that are immoderate, exorbitant, or arbitrary may discourage applications.

4.1 Fee increases

The department acknowledges that fee increases may be necessary from time to time. Skilled migration assessment fees should be set at a level commensurate with the cost of providing skills assessments and that do not represent an unreasonable barrier to a person applying for this service. The Department expects that fee increases generally would align with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Where proposed fee increases exceed CPI, assessing authorities should provide justification for the increases.

To avoid significant fee increases, the department recommends that assessing authorities review their fees regularly, ideally on an annual basis.

To notify the Department of any fee increases, assessing authorities should send an email to AAQA@dewr.gov.au with the subject line "Notification of Fee Increases", not less than three months prior to the intended implementation date. The notification should set out the reasons for the fee increases and attach a schedule of the new fees.

Where relevant fees must be published in a legislative instrument, the assessing authority should justify any significant fee increases with a detailed explanation.

4.2 Requests for documents

Requests for documents that an applicant is unlikely to be able to provide and which are not in accordance with practical realities, would constitute an unreasonable barrier. For example, a demand for documents from a considerable time in the past may exclude some applicants unfairly. Assessing authorities should consider the value and relevance of documents when determining the period to which the requests for documents apply.

5. Risk management

Risk management processes define how an organisation identifies, analyses and manages risk. They outline how the organisation will perform, record and monitor risk management activities, and provide guidelines for recording and prioritising risks.

Fraudulent claims represent a threat to the integrity of the skilled migration program. It is reasonable for assessing authorities to put the onus on the applicant to substantiate their request for a skills assessment with adequate evidence. Assessing authorities may disregard evidence that is unverified and inconsistent with other information. The following sections provide guidance on what constitutes fraud, and how to identify it.

5.1 Fraudulent claims

Fraudulent claims occur when a skills assessment applicant makes false or deliberately misleading claims in an application. Examples include:

- providing a false statement or misrepresenting the truth in an application
- not declaring previous relevant adverse information, or
- deliberately not answering an application question.

5.2 Risk indicators

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:

- illogical or unusual study and/or employment claims
- spelling and grammar mistakes on official documents
- overly elaborate documents with multiple fonts and extravagant borders
- content of work references plagiarised from open sources (for example, duties in a work reference copied directly from the ANZSCO website)
- previously refused applications
- multiple, different applications with the same information and/or contact details listed
- poor quality copies of documents submitted with an application
- position duties not consistent with those listed in the ANZSCO entry for the occupation
- position salary not matching expectations
- overlapping dates of employment
- inability to provide evidence to support claims.

5.3 Identity fraud

Identity fraud is when an applicant attempts to fabricate or manipulate their identity or steals /adopts the identity of another person. Identity fraud is also used to conceal or facilitate other fraudulent or illicit behaviour. It is distinct from Document Fraud (considered at **5.4**).

Examples include:

- where a document (for example, passport, birth certificate, family register) is genuinely manufactured and issued, but subsequently the identity details have been fraudulently altered.

(For example, there is evidence of replacement of pages, substitution of photographs, manipulation of other biometrics data by the applicant or another criminal actor.)

- 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. (For example, where an applicant submits someone else's birth certificate to gain a passport for themselves or uses an impostor to sit an English Language test).
- where a document, its content and/or source are fabricated, but purport to be in a form provided by a legitimate source. (For example, where an applicant fabricates a birth certificate with incorrect information).

To manage identity fraud, the assessing authority should obtain a level of identity assurance that aligns to that of Home Affairs. To meet this standard, the assessing authority should obtain copies of at least three of the following documents:

1. birth certificate
2. passport
3. where possible, an Australian visa (supported by a foreign passport, which is needed for verification) OR ImmiCard
4. at least one other official photo bearing document
5. ID card where relevant.

In addition, the assessing authority should undertake as many of the following activities as necessary to assure the identity of the applicant or the integrity of the process:

1. manual/visual comparison of a person's face against a photograph on a primary piece of evidence (either remotely or in-person)
2. verification (where relevant) of a biometric template collected at registration (either remotely or in-person) against a biometric template held by an authoritative source
3. utilising Home Affairs' [Visa Entitlement Verification Online \(VEVO\)](#) to allow access to visa details and conditions and verify visa documentation
4. quality assurance processes to assess quality of assessments and address situations of fraud within the organisation (for example, staff member receiving money for positive skills assessments).

5.4 Document fraud

While identity fraud and document fraud share common characteristics, the latter involves alteration of a document's details. Examples include:

- where an employment reference for the applicant has been genuinely manufactured and issued, but which has subsequently been altered to enhance duties performed and/or dates of employment,
- where a tertiary qualification genuinely manufactured but issued to an applicant based on fraudulent information provided to the issuing authority or corrupt behaviour of staff within an issuing authority,

- where an employment reference on fake letterhead cites false employment claims with a bogus employer.

Document verification should include the following activities.

5.4.1. Open-source checks

In this context, 'open source' means any publicly available information.¹ Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Australian Business Number Lookup website
- Fair Work Ombudsman website (for wage information)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics website (for ANZSCO title/codes)
- Business websites (for employer/employment claims)
- Google Maps (for employer/employment claims, an assessing authority can enter the claimed business address and assess whether the street view matches up with the claimed operation of the business)
- University websites (for education related claims)
- Xe and OANDA websites (for currency conversion rates)
- Ausregistry and Whois (domain registry for searching who owns a website)
- Search engines such as Google, and Social Media sites, such as Facebook, LinkedIn (for identity, employment, residency claims)
- Public Register of Authentic travel and identity Documents Online (PRADO) website (for sample documents of travel documents to compare those submitted by the applicant)
- Google 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.

5.4.2. Telephone interviews

Telephoning an applicant or a claimed employer is 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 be more problematic but still feasible in some circumstances²

It is preferable not to make an appointment for a telephone interview with the applicant/employer, but to call them and ask whether they can spare a few minutes to talk. Be on the lookout for responses that appear overly scripted, repetitive, evasive, or if it appears that someone may be with the applicant and assisting them.

¹ It is important to note that the information gained from open source checks is not necessarily managed by reliable sources and thus may not be totally reliable or up to date. Therefore, open source information should be viewed with caution and used to help establish an overall picture of an application, rather than being relied upon too heavily when making decisions.

² Large, reputable employers may have privacy policies that prevent them from sharing details of their workers' employment details over the telephone. In such cases, they may agree to provide the information if a request is received in writing. That is, by email or hard mail to the relevant area, such as the Human Resources section of the business. If so, an assessing authority may consider requesting the information as instructed.

5.4.3. Email Checks

Emailing or writing to an employer directly can be effective for large, reputable employers (or education providers). If 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) which may indicate non genuineness. It is recommended that an assessing authority confirms email address details (and all contact information in general) independently from open-source checks if possible.

5.4.4. Disruption activities

Include overt measures to mitigate or impede fraud risk. Examples include:

- refusing or 'declining to assess' applications where fraud is identified
- openly advising and advertising to applicants that incidents of fraud will be disclosed to Home Affairs
- notifying Home Affairs via agreed channels when fraud is identified and when applications are refused
- notifying Home Affairs of any trends or suspicions an assessing authority may have about a cohort of applicants or a particular migration agent
- conducting more thorough assessments on a targeted cohort
- conducting industry information campaigns about the consequences of fraud, including information on an assessing authority's website.

To seek advice from Home Affairs on fraud and risk related matters for specific cases, or to report a suspicion of fraud please contact

Economic.Skilled.Visa.Assurance@homeaffairs.gov.au

6. Monitoring

To maintain the integrity of the approval process for assessing authorities, approvals granted by the Minister are subject to review. In determining whether an assessing authority ought to continue to be approved under sub regulation 2.26B(1A) of the *Migration Regulations 1994*, an assessing authority should, if requested, provide evidence of its continued commitment to the assessing authority's approval criteria.

6.1 Monitoring activities

To support understanding of and commitment to best practice, an approved assessing authority should participate in the Department's monitoring arrangements by providing information according to parameters and in the format identified by the Department.

When requested, monitoring documentation should be submitted to

AAQA@dewr.gov.au .

6.1.1. Ongoing approval

The monitoring activities for ongoing approval may include:

- appraisal of offshore assessment process (where applicable)
- website check

- Guideline's compliance check, including:
 - financial viability
 - skills assessment costs
 - industry standards check
 - assessment advice letter/outcome or result letter
 - feedback to unsuitable applicants
 - exam intervals and locations (if relevant)
 - processes for managing risk, which may include an audit conducted by the Department or Home Affairs.

6.1.2. Six-monthly reporting

Skills assessment statistics may alert the Department to an issue with a skills assessment process; for example, if no suitable skills assessments are issued, there may be a problem with the process.

Reporting also enhances an understanding of risks and opportunities and can be used to influence long-term policy development.

Reporting also contributes to the streamlining of processes to improve efficiency and outcomes.

Assessing authorities are required to provide the information described below every six months in the template provided by the Department:

- the number of skills assessments by suitable/not suitable outcome
- country of passport
- a breakdown of not suitable outcomes by criteria not met
- the number of review and appeal requests, including outcomes
- the number of assessments for applicants with Australian qualifications
- additional information at the discretion of the Department.

6.1.3. Changes to occupational assessment standards

Assessing authorities must inform the Department about changes to occupational assessment standards. The Department expects that any changes to occupational assessment standards will not disadvantage applicants already in the process of being assessed.

7. Support

The Department is available to assist assessing authorities to maintain their observance of the Guidelines. To this end, the Assessing Authorities Quality Assurance (AAQA) team within the Department will provide information and support to:

1. ensure timely and accurate internal and external communications
2. support assessing authorities to be clear about their obligations
3. assist assessing authorities to understand the requirements set out in the Guidelines
4. update stakeholders
5. create a dialogue among relevant stakeholders.

7.1 Teleconferences

Teleconferences may be appropriate for discussing monitoring issues as they arise and to provide clarification on policy, implementation, and reporting issues.

A teleconference may be initiated by the assessing authority or by AAQA.

7.2 Assessing Authorities Workshops

The Department will conduct online meetings and workshops for assessing authorities to connect over mutual experiences, discuss topical issues and to share information.

In addition, the workshops will provide a forum for the Department to advise assessing authorities on governance matters, a summary of data received in the six-monthly reports and any changes to current arrangements. Assessing authorities may suggest a topic for a workshop.

7.3 Adding or removing an occupation from scope

An approved assessing authority wanting to add an occupation to its scope is required to apply to the Department and address the requirements at subsections, **3.1 Provision of information**, **3.2 Occupational assessment standards** and **3.4 Skills assessments** with respect to that additional occupation.

The Department will from time to time review the allocation of occupations and may make recommendations to the Skills Assessment Minister, who has discretion to approve or reject an application and the allocation of occupations.

7.4 Contact AAQA

When requesting advice, providing feedback or proposing a teleconference, assessing authorities should contact the AAQA@dewr.gov.au mailbox.