

INFORMATION ON 457 SKILLS ASSESSMENTS FOR ELECTRICAL TRADES

Background to 457 Skills Assessments

The Australian Government offers a program called the **Subclass 457 Business (Long Stay) Visa – Standard Business Sponsorship** (subclass 457 visa) visa for Australian employers to sponsor approved skilled workers from outside Australia to work in Australia on a temporary visa.

From 1 July 2009, the Australian Government has introduced changes to the Subclass 457 visa program in order to ensure that it continues to provide Australian industry with the skills it needs and to improve the program for overseas workers.

Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) is progressively introducing formal skills assessments from 1 July 2009 for 457 visa applicants from 10 nominated countries in 5 nominated trade occupations.

From 1 July 2009 temporary workers applying for a 457 visa in the nominated trades from the nominated countries must undertake a five step skills assessment managed by Trades Recognition Australia.

One electrical trade occupation has been included in the list of trades nominated for a skills assessment: General Electrician. A licence is required to work in this trade in Australia. The information below relates to the skills assessment and licensing in Australia.

Information for Overseas worker (Employee)

Overseas workers seeking sponsorship in the licensed trade of General Electrician will be assessed in their country of origin by an Australian Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

Overseas workers who meet the technical requirements for the range of duties required for the occupations will be issued an Offshore Technical Skills Record (OTSR).

When you arrive in Australia you will need to apply to the relevant state/territory licensing regulator for a provisional electrical licence. A provisional licence allows you to work under the supervision of a qualified tradesperson. You must present your OTSR to the licensing regulator when you apply for the provisional licence.

Contact details of licensing authorities for all states/territories may be found at:

<http://www.licencerecognition.gov.au/authorities.aspx>

Even though your skills assessment will confirm your technical skills, you will naturally not be familiar with specific Australian knowledge such as Australian wiring rules, occupational health and safety regulations, and codes of practice and other Australian standards. Gap training has been developed to help migrants meet the Australian specific knowledge gap.

The gap training will consist of:

- gaining essential knowledge and skills from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)
- completing up to 12 months work experience under appropriate supervision; and
- passing a compliance assessment related to safety and compliance testing to Australian standards

More information on the gap training is available at the ElectroComms and Energy Utilities Industry Skills Council website : <http://www.ee-oz.com.au/content/view/82/56/>.

Once you have successfully completed the gap training and been issued with the required Certificate III qualification you can present this qualification to the relevant licensing regulator to be issued a full electrical licence.

Information for Employer

Overseas workers seeking employment in the licensed trade of General Electrical are assessed in their country of origin against the minimum technical competencies required to work in that occupation in Australia.

Individuals meeting the technical aspects of the assessment process will be issued with an Offshore Technical Skills Record (OTSR). This indicates that the worker has the range of technical skills required in that occupation. Licensing requirements in this occupation however also require workers to be familiar with specific Australian knowledge such as Australian wiring rules, occupational health and safety regulations, codes of practice and other Australian standards and to have relevant practical experience under the supervision of a licensed worker. Migrants can not be expected to have this knowledge or experience.

The OTSR entitles the individual to a provisional licence. This will enable the individual to work in Australia while they complete a gap training program. You should check with the relevant licensing authority in your state about your responsibilities in relation to an employee on a provisional license.

Contact details for all state/territory licensing authorities may be found at:
<http://www.licencerecognition.gov.au/authorities.aspx>

You will also need to support the overseas worker as they undertake their gap training. The gap training will consist of:

- gaining essential knowledge and skills from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)
- completing up to 12 months work experience under appropriate supervision; and
- passing a compliance assessment related to safety and compliance testing to Australian standards

More information on the gap training is available at the ElectroComms and Energy Utilities Industry Skills Council website: <http://www.ee-oz.com.au/content/view/82/56/>.

Once the individual has successfully completed the gap training and been issued with the required Certificate III qualification they can present their qualification to the relevant licensing regulator to be issued a full electrical licence.