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Department of Education and Training

Offshore Skills Assessment Program Applicant Guidelines

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Table of Contents

Section 1	Applicant Information	4
1.1	Introduction to Trades Recognition Australia.....	4
1.2	Program objective.....	4
1.3	Applicant Guidelines	4
Section 2	Assessment Process	5
2.1	Eligibility.....	5
2.2	Steps in the assessment process	6
2.3	Pathway 1: For applicants who do not have a relevant Australian VET qualification	7
2.4	Pathway 2: For applicants who do have a relevant Australian VET qualification or a current, identified Australian occupational licence.....	9
2.5	Review.....	10
2.6	Fees	10
2.7	Timeline	11
2.8	Use of agents or representatives.....	11
Section 3	Applicant responsibilities and documentary requirements	12
3.1	Applicant roles and responsibilities	12
3.2	Documentary evidence	12
3.3	Employment statements.....	12
Section 4	Program administration	14
4.1	TRA roles and responsibilities	14
4.2	TRA-approved RTO roles and responsibilities.....	14
4.3	Privacy.....	14
4.4	False or misleading information	16
4.5	Relevant legislation.....	16
Section 5	Contact Details	17
5.1	Locate a registered training organisation to conduct a skills assessment.....	17
5.2	General enquiries about OSAP	17
Section 6	Glossary	18
Section 7	Acronyms	20
Section 8	Recent document change history	21

The Offshore Skills Assessment Program

Section 1 Applicant Information

Terms explained in the [Glossary](#) are **bolded** when they first appear in this document.

1.1 Introduction to Trades Recognition Australia

Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) is an Australian Government business unit attached to the **Department of Education and Training**. It is the relevant assessing authority for nominated occupations under the *Migration Regulations 1994*.

TRA engages **TRA-approved registered training organisations (TRA-approved RTOs)** to perform aspects of the skills assessment process on its behalf under certain programs. The skills assessments are for people who have gained trade skills overseas or in Australia for the purpose of migration and skills recognition.

TRA offers several different skills assessment programs which are based on your occupation, country of passport, where you studied and the type of visa you are seeking.

1.2 Program objective

The objective of the **Offshore Skills Assessment Program (OSAP)** is to determine whether an **applicant** is able to work in Australia at the required skill level for the **nominated occupation**. This aims to ensure successful applicants can contribute immediately to Australia's skilled workforce.

A **skills assessment** through OSAP, is for people who are applying for a skilled migration visa to Australia (excluding 485 or 457 visas), who work in a nominated occupation and hold a passport from a **nominated country** or **Special Administrative Region (SAR)**.

1.3 Applicant Guidelines

These guidelines describe OSAP and outline the requirements in applying for a skills assessment.

You must read the eligibility requirements for OSAP before starting an application (see [Section 2.1](#)). If you do not understand any part of the eligibility requirements, please contact TRA through the [TRA website](#) (www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au).

These guidelines do not provide specific information on visa or points requirements for migration. All enquiries relating to migration requirements must be directed to the Australian **Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP)** (www.border.gov.au).

You are advised to check with the DIBP before submitting your application, to ensure the appropriate visa pathway has been identified, and that TRA is the correct assessing authority for your nominated occupation.

TRA reserves the right to amend these guidelines as necessary. Information about changes to the guidelines will be documented in the recent document change history table in [Section 8](#) and posted as a news item on the TRA website.

Section 2 Assessment Process

2.1 Eligibility

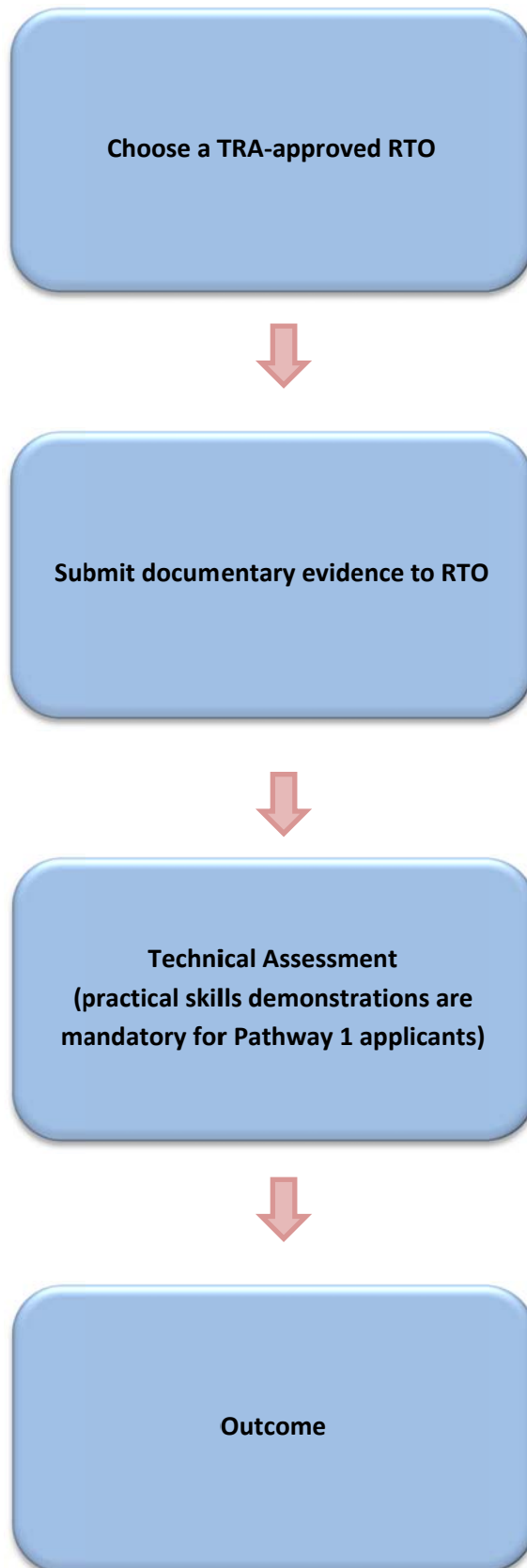
The nominated occupations, nominated countries, and SARs for the OSAP are listed on the OSAP Program page on the TRA website:

<http://www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au/Programs/Offshore/Pages/default.aspx>.

The OSAP is also available for applicants choosing to undertake a skills assessment in a nominated occupation who can travel to Australia or a nominated country for a skills assessment.

If you wish to apply for a skilled migration visa (excluding 485 or 457 visas) but your nominated occupation is **not listed** on the OSAP Program page on the TRA website, you need to apply for assessment under the Migration Skills Assessment Program.

2.2 Steps in the assessment process



2.3 Pathway 1: For applicants who do not have a relevant Australian VET qualification

Choose a TRA-approved RTO

You are required to select an RTO to conduct your skills assessment. This is completed through the [RTO Finder](http://www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au/Programs/Pages/RTO-Finder.aspx) (<http://www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au/Programs/Pages/RTO-Finder.aspx>) located on the TRA website by:

- selecting your nominated occupation from the list available
- reviewing the list of TRA-approved RTOs.

Submit Documentary Evidence

You must submit **decision ready** documentary evidence of your identity, skills and employment experience to a TRA-approved RTO for assessment. The RTO will advise you about the documentation that must be provided which may include:

- recent passport-sized photographs
- a copy of the biographical identification page of your current passport
- evidence of skills and experience including, but not limited to, training documents, evidence of employment and employment statements
- copies of each document in original language accompanied by a copy of the English translation.

If the evidence provided indicates you have the necessary skills and experience relevant to your nominated occupation, you will be invited to participate in a technical assessment with one of the RTO's assessors.

If the documentary evidence does not sufficiently demonstrate skills and experience relevant to your nominated occupation, the RTO will advise you of any identified skills gaps.

Technical Assessment

You will be required to participate in a technical assessment of your skills and knowledge, conducted by a qualified assessor who will be an Australian qualified tradesperson in your nominated occupation.

The assessor will focus on collecting evidence to determine if you meet the requirements of the relevant **VET qualification** in the **Australian Training Package** for your nominated occupation. This will involve a technical interview and may involve a practical demonstration of skills and/or gathering evidence from any nominated employers or other referees.

If you are applying for one of the **licensed occupations** of Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanic, Electrician (General), Electrician (Special Class) and Plumber (General), a practical demonstration of your skills is compulsory.

The RTO will discuss the assessment requirements with you before conducting the assessment.

All technical assessments will be conducted in English without assistance. Interpreters are not permitted.

Outcome

The TRA-approved RTO will notify you of the outcome of your assessment.

You will have met the standards set by TRA under OSAP if:

- all evidence you have provided can be verified by the TRA-approved RTO as meeting the requirements for a successful skills assessment
- you were successful in meeting the requirements of the technical assessment.

Successful applicants in the non-licensed occupations will be awarded the relevant Australian VET qualification.

Successful applicants in the licensed occupations will be issued with an **Offshore Technical Skills Record (OTSR)**. The OTSR is sufficient evidence to apply for a provisional licence with Australian state and territory licensing authorities.

For OTSR holders who wish to progress to a **current, identified Australian occupational licence** and be awarded the relevant Australian VET qualification, Australian context gap training and a period of supervised employment will be required. The training covers Australian-specific knowledge such as occupational health and safety regulations, codes of practice and other Australian standards. For further information refer to the [Licensing](#) (<http://tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au/Programs/Pages/GainLicence.aspx>) page on the TRA website.

If successful, you will receive an outcome letter which can be presented to DIBP with your visa application.

You will **not** have met the standards set by TRA under OSAP if:

- the documentary evidence provided to the TRA-approved RTO is not decision ready
- the documentary evidence provided to the TRA-approved RTO is not relevant to your nominated occupation
- the documentary evidence provided contains insufficient detail to meet OSAP requirements
- the documentary evidence is found to contain false or misleading information
- you were unsuccessful in meeting the requirements of the technical assessment.

If unsuccessful, the RTO will advise of any gaps identified in your skills and experience.

2.4 Pathway 2: For applicants who do have a relevant Australian VET qualification or a current, identified Australian occupational licence

Note: For holders of a current, identified Australian occupational licence

If you need a skills assessment outcome for migration purposes, you will need to undertake a Pathway 2 assessment through a TRA-approved RTO. However, a successful Pathway 2 assessment does not result in award of a Certificate III. If you want to be assessed for a Certificate III Australian VET qualification, you should approach an RTO for a recognition of prior learning (RPL) assessment. RTO details are available on www.training.gov.au.

Choose a TRA-approved RTO

You are required to select an RTO to conduct your skills assessment. This is completed through the [RTO Finder](#) located on the TRA website by:

- selecting your nominated occupation from the list available
- reviewing the list of TRA-approved RTOs.

The TRA-approved RTO selected must not be the RTO that issued your Australian VET qualification (if applicable).

Submit documentary evidence for assessment

The RTO will advise what documentation must be provided, but you must submit decision ready documentary evidence of your identity, skills and employment experience. This will include an Australian VET qualification or current, identified Australian occupational licence.

You also need to demonstrate at least three years full-time, paid employment in a directly related occupation. This must include 12 months full-time, paid employment in your nominated occupation in the three years prior to lodging the application. If you are applying with a current, identified Australian occupational licence, the 12 months full-time, paid employment must be in Australia.

Evidence of part time employment can also be counted towards the employment requirement on a pro rata basis.

The type of work undertaken must cover a broad range of skills in the nominated occupation. If the evidence indicates that you have the necessary skills and experience relevant to your nominated occupation, you will be invited to participate in a technical assessment with one of the RTO's assessors.

If the documentary evidence does not sufficiently demonstrate skills and experience relevant to your nominated occupation, the RTO will advise you of any identified skills gaps.

Technical Assessment

You will be required to participate in a technical assessment of your skills and knowledge, conducted by a qualified assessor who will be an Australian qualified tradesperson in your nominated occupation.

The assessor will focus on collecting evidence to determine if you are capable of undertaking the full range of tasks expected of a tradesperson in Australia for your nominated occupation.

This will involve a technical interview of skills and/or gathering evidence from nominated employers or other referees.

The RTO will discuss the assessment requirements with you before conducting the assessment.

All technical assessments will be conducted in English without assistance. Interpreters are not permitted.

Outcome

The TRA-approved RTO will notify you of the outcome of your assessment.

You will have met the standards set by TRA under OSAP if:

- all evidence you have provided can be verified by the TRA-approved RTO as meeting the requirements for a successful skills assessment
- you were successful in meeting the requirements of the technical assessment.

If successful, you will receive a skilled migration outcome letter which can be presented to DIBP with your visa application.

You will **not** have met the standards set by TRA under OSAP if:

- the documentary evidence provided to the TRA-approved RTO is not decision ready
- the documentary evidence provided to the TRA-approved RTO is not relevant to your nominated occupation
- the documentary evidence provided contains insufficient detail to meet OSAP requirements
- the documentary evidence is found to contain false or misleading information
- you were unsuccessful in meeting the requirements of the technical assessment.

If unsuccessful, the RTO will advise of gaps identified in your skills and experience.

2.5 Review

If you disagree with an assessment outcome, you may lodge an application for assessment **review** with the TRA-approved RTO that conducted the skills assessment. The RTO may charge a review assessment fee.

Refer to the RTO's website for details about how to apply and the costs involved.

2.6 Fees

Fees for a skills assessment are paid directly to the TRA-approved RTO selected by the applicant to conduct the skills assessment.

For detailed fee information, visit the individual RTO websites using the links on the RTO Finder located on the TRA website.

2.7 Timeline

The TRA-approved RTO can advise how long the assessment process will take. Typically, an assessment will be completed within 13 weeks from the date of submitting the required documentary evidence.

2.8 Use of agents or representatives

You are not required to nominate an agent or representative for OSAP. However, if an agent or representative is nominated to act on your behalf during the skills assessment process, notification must be provided to the chosen TRA-approved RTO. The TRA-approved RTO cannot write or speak to a third party regarding the skills assessment without written approval from you as the applicant.

If you choose to use an agent or representative, you must provide the chosen TRA-approved RTO with a signed nomination form from this person. Nomination forms are available on the TRA-approved RTO's website. A new form must be completed and submitted to the TRA-approved RTO if you change your agent or representative. Information provided on these forms will replace any previous agent details held by the TRA-approved RTO.

DIBP provides advice about the use of migration agents in Australia. Visit <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa/Usin> for more information.

Section 3 Applicant responsibilities and documentary requirements

3.1 Applicant roles and responsibilities

As an applicant you must:

- accurately and honestly complete the required skills assessment application and declaration forms issued by the TRA-approved RTO conducting the skills assessment
- provide authentic and current evidence to the TRA-approved RTO to enable the skills assessment to be conducted
- ensure the documentary evidence submitted to the TRA-approved RTO is complete and decision ready
- participate in the skills assessment as advised by the TRA-approved RTO
- pay all skills assessment fees to the TRA-approved RTO
- have lodged, or intend to lodge, an application with DIBP for a skilled migration visa (excluding subclass 457 & 485 visas).

3.2 Documentary evidence

TRA-approved RTOs must be able to verify the content and validity of all documents you provide to support your application. Therefore, the following minimum quality control standards apply to documents submitted electronically:

- scans must be of original documents; scans of copies will not be accepted
- scans must be in colour; black and white copies will not be accepted
- the minimum scan resolution is 150 dpi (dots per inch).

TRA-approved RTOs can request that you present original documents for verification, and will discuss these arrangements and any additional requirements with you.

3.3 Employment statements

All statements provided to a TRA-approved RTO relating to your employment or work experience must be signed by your employer or their representative who is authorised and capable of making the statement. All employer statements must be on letterhead used by the employer's business.

Every employment statement provided to a TRA-approved RTO must include:

- start and end dates of employment
- the business address of your workplace
- normal hours of work
- the nature of employment (full time, part time)
- your job title (occupation)

- a detailed description of the tasks undertaken along with the machines, tools or equipment used
- the name, position, contact details and signature of the person authorised to make the statement and the length of time they supervised you.

TRA-approved RTOs may contact an employer to verify information provided in an employer statement. A contact telephone number is required for every person who supplies an employment statement. A mobile telephone number will not be sufficient as a primary contact number, unless the TRA-approved RTO can independently verify the mobile telephone number is linked to the organisation.

Section 4 Program administration

4.1 TRA roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of TRA in relation to OSAP include (but are not limited to):

- ensuring the objectives of the program are met
- providing up-to-date information about program processes and procedures
- contract management and monitoring of TRA-approved RTOs
- responding to enquiries about the program
- policy development and advice
- developing and maintaining an appropriate IT system to support the program
- liaising with DIBP and relevant stakeholders about the program
- responding to complaints that cannot otherwise be dealt with by the TRA-approved RTOs
- managing evaluations of the program
- undertaking compliance and investigative measures as required.

4.2 TRA-approved RTO roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of TRA-approved RTOs to deliver the assessment services include (but are not limited to):

- meeting their obligations under the VET Quality Framework
- conducting an assessment of the evidence an applicant provides in accordance with the RTO's documented processes and procedures
- notifying the applicant of the skills assessment outcome including issuing the appropriate documentation
- liaising directly with the applicant in response to enquiries, acknowledging application and payment of fees, managing the assessment and review processes and complaint handling.

4.3 Privacy

The collection, use and disclosure of personal information by TRA is subject to the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act). Schedule 1 of the Privacy Act contains the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), which outline the rules for handling personal information.

The Privacy Act defines 'personal information' as:

"Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:

(a) Whether the information or opinion is true or not; and

(b) Whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not."

Privacy Information

Under the APPs, the Department of Education and Training (Department) is required to have a clearly expressed and up to date policy about the way the Department manages personal information. This policy contains information about how you may access the personal information the Department holds about you, and how you may correct any inaccuracies in that information. We will correct your personal information if it is inaccurate (subject to restrictions on such access/alteration of records under the applicable provisions of any law of the Commonwealth).

It also includes information as to how you may make a complaint about a breach of the APPs, and how the Department will respond to such a complaint.

A copy of the Department's privacy policy is available on the Department's website at:

<https://www.education.gov.au/privacy-policy>.

More information about the Privacy Act, including a copy of the full text of the APPs, can be obtained from the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's website at:

www.oaic.gov.au.

Collection

TRA collects applicants' personal information for the purposes of:

- verifying skills assessment outcomes under the *Migration Regulations 1994*
- quantitative and qualitative research to inform policy and program management
- conducting investigations and ensuring compliance with relevant laws, awards or standards
- ensuring compliance with the *Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines (2011)*.

Personal information collected by the Department will only be used for the purposes outlined above.

In the course of assessing your application, TRA may receive unsolicited personal information about the applicant from a third party. If TRA would normally have been able to collect that information or it forms a part of a Commonwealth record, it will be treated in accordance with the APPs. If not, TRA will destroy or de-identify that information.

Disclosure

TRA may give some or all of the information it collects from the applicant or a third party to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, the Australian Federal Police, TRA approved registered training organisations, the Australian Skills Quality Authority, contractors, the Fair Work Ombudsman and other Australian and state/territory government agencies.

TRA may disclose the applicant's personal information to these entities for the reasons that are listed above in the collection section.

Complaints

Please note, applicants are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and validity of all information provided to TRA.

Complaints about breaches of privacy should be referred to:

Privacy Contact Officer
Legal and Compliance Group
Department of Education and Training
GPO Box 9880
CANBERRA ACT 2601
AUSTRALIA
Email: privacy@education.gov.au

4.4 False or misleading information

TRA-approved RTOs will take reasonable steps to verify the validity of information received throughout the skills assessment process.

The applicant is responsible for ensuring the accuracy and validity of all information provided to the RTO chosen to conduct the skills assessment.

If a TRA-approved RTO determines that information previously supplied is false, misleading, non-factual or incorrect information, and that by relying on that information the applicant has been incorrectly assessed as successful, TRA will notify DIBP.

TRA may refer matters to the appropriate authorities for investigation where information that has been provided to support an application is known or believed to be false.

NOTE: Penalties apply under the *Crimes Act 1914* and the *Criminal Code Act 1995* may apply for making false or misleading statements and providing false or misleading information or documents.

4.5 Relevant legislation

TRA is the relevant assessing authority for a range of trade and associate professional occupations under the [Migration Regulations 1994](#).

Under Subregulation 2.26B(2) of the *Migration Regulations 1994*, TRA sets the standards against which a person's skills are assessed.

Section 5 Contact Details

5.1 Locate a registered training organisation to conduct a skills assessment

To locate an RTO to conduct a skills assessment, please use the [RTO Finder](#) located on the TRA website by:

- selecting the nominated occupation from the list available
- reviewing the list of TRA-approved RTOs.

5.2 General enquiries about OSAP

Contact Trades Recognition Australia on the details below:

Phone	Monday to Friday: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm and 1.00 pm – 4.00 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time, excluding public holidays (GMT +10 hours) Outside Australia: +61 2 6240 8778 Within Australia: 1300 360 992
Email	traenquiries@education.gov.au
Web	www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au
Post	Trades Recognition Australia Department of Education and Training GPO Box 3022 CANBERRA ACT 2601 AUSTRALIA

Section 6 Glossary

Term used in Guidelines	Definition
applicant	A person who submits an application to the Offshore Skills Assessment Program.
Australian Training Package	A set of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications developed by industry to ensure quality training outcomes to meet current and emerging vocational skill needs.
current, identified Australian occupational licence	The registration, certificate or other form of authorisation required under law to perform work that has been issued by the appropriate Australian licensing authority and is relevant to the nominated occupation.
decision ready	Means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all documents requested by the TRA-approved RTO are provided when an application is lodged and conform to the format requested • employment statements conform to the requirements set out in Section 3.3
Department of Education and Training	The department is responsible for national policies and programs that help Australians access quality and affordable early childcare and childhood education, school education, higher education, vocational education and training, international education and research.
Department of Immigration and Border Protection	DIBP has responsibility for administering the <i>Migration Act 1958</i> and associated Regulations. DIBP works in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training to deliver skilled trades/technical people and professionals to Australia through the skilled migration program.
licensed occupations	The occupations of Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanic, Electrician (General), Electrician (Special Class) and Plumber (General).
migration agent	In Australia, people who want to provide immigration assistance must be registered with the Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority. A registered migration agent can use their knowledge of Australia's migration procedures to offer advice or assistance to a person wishing to obtain a visa to enter or remain in Australia. They can also assist people who are nominating or sponsoring prospective visa applicants.
nominated country	One of the countries listed on the OSAP Program page on the TRA website.

Term used in Guidelines	Definition
nominated occupation	One of the occupations on the OSAP Program page on the TRA website.
Offshore Technical Skills Record	<p>The document that is issued when an applicant in a licensed occupation has been found to have partially met the technical competencies to be awarded a Certificate III Australian VET qualification. An OTSR holder can apply for a provisional licence to work in their occupation in Australia.</p> <p>To be awarded the VET qualification for a licensed occupation, the OTSR holder must complete Australian context gap training and a period of supervised employment in Australia in their nominated occupation.</p>
review	A request to re-examine an application when the applicant does not agree with an unsuccessful assessment outcome.
skills assessment	The process of collecting evidence and making judgments on whether an individual can work to the standard expected in an Australian workplace.
Special Administrative Region	One of the SARs listed on the OSAP Program page on the TRA website.
Trades Recognition Australia	A skills assessment service provider specialising in assessments for people with trade skills gained overseas for the purpose of migration and skills recognition.
TRA-approved registered training organisation	A registered training organisation approved by TRA to deliver skills assessments for the Offshore Skills Assessment Program. They also issue nationally recognised qualifications in accordance with the VET Quality Framework.
VET qualification	A certificate, relating to an Australian VET course, given to a person confirming they have achieved learning outcomes and competencies that satisfy the requirements of a qualification.

Section 7 Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
APPs	Australian Privacy Principles
DIBP	Department of Immigration and Border Protection
OSAP	Offshore Skills Assessment Program
OTSR	Offshore Technical Skills Record
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	registered training organisation
SAR	Special Administrative Region
TRA	Trades Recognition Australia
VET	vocational education and training

Section 8 Recent document change history

Version	Date published	Authors	Summary of change	Authorised by
4.1	March 2014	TRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to countries and occupations, including transitional Opt-in assessment arrangements for nominated countries and occupations at Section 2.2. 	Dr Melissa McEwen, General Manager TRA
4.2	April 2014	TRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of Vehicle Body Builder. Replace TRA and RTO Finder website links with the new website links. Removed references to the Transitional Opt-in Assessments at Section 2.2 	Dr Melissa McEwen General Manager TRA
4.3	June 2014	TRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removed references to the Transitional Opt-in Assessments at Section 2.2 	Dr Melissa McEwen General Manager TRA
4.4	January 2015	TRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of Motorcycle Mechanic and Small Engine Mechanic and connected countries from Section 2.2. Removal of Brazil, Iran, Republic of Korea, United Arab Emirates and Zimbabwe for Electrician (General), Electrician (Special Class) and Plumber (General) from Section 2.2. Removal of Iran for Automotive Electrician, Baker, Diesel Motor Mechanic and Electronic Equipment Trades Worker. 	Dr Melissa McEwen General Manager TRA
5.0	March 2015	TRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update information to reflect change in Government Departments 	Dr Melissa McEwen Branch Manager TRA

Version	Date published	Authors	Summary of change	Authorised by
6.0	June 2016	TRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update to list of nominated occupations and countries. • Change to allow applicants with a current, identified Australian occupational licence to apply under Pathway 2. • Minor amendments to text and major format changes. • Update to privacy notice. • Removal of references to certification of documents. • Change for introduction of electronic submission for documentary evidence (Section 3.2). • Replace eligibility table with referral to OSAP Eligibility page on TRA website. 	Mr Kevin Brahim Branch Manager State Network and TRA
7.0	July 2017	TRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of references to TradeSET • Minor amendments to text 	Ms Anne Flynn A/g Branch Manager Foundation Skills and TRA