



1 July 2011 - Points Test for Certain Skilled Migration Visas

The points test is a mechanism used to help select skilled migrants who offer the best in terms of economic benefit to Australia. The points test creates a selection process that is transparent and objective, awarding points to the skills and attributes considered to be in need in Australia. The 1 July 2011 points test is designed to select the best and brightest skilled migrants who will make the optimum economic contribution to Australia. It does not give undue weight to any one factor and recognises a broader range of skills and attributes, focussing on:

- better English levels
- more extensive skilled employment
- higher level qualifications obtained in Australia and overseas
- better targeted age ranges

Points will no longer be awarded for specific occupations, although all applicants must still nominate an occupation on the Skilled Occupation List (SOL) and have their skills assessed in their nominated occupation.

The pass mark is the total amount of points needed to be eligible for grant of a visa and will be set at 65 points. A table summarising the points awarded can be found at the end of this fact sheet. The points test only applies to applicants for the following visas:

- Subclass 475 Skilled – Regional Sponsored
- Subclass 487 Skilled Regional Sponsored
- Subclass 175 Skilled Independent
- Subclass 885 Skilled Independent
- Subclass 176 Skilled Sponsored
- Subclass 886 Skilled Sponsored

Information about eligibility requirements

To apply for one of the above visas, applicants need to satisfy the following threshold requirements:

- be under 50 years of age at the time of applying for a visa.
- meet the threshold English language requirement of competent English.
- nominate and hold a skilled assessment for an occupation on the Skilled Occupation List at the time of lodging their application.
- provide evidence of recent skilled employment in a skilled occupation or have recently completed the Australian Study requirement.

Applicants eligible for 8 February 2010 transitional arrangements

Transitional arrangements apply for certain students and former student visa holders announced on 8 February 2010.

They may also be eligible for points for an occupation on the former Migration Occupation in Demand List (MODL).

See: www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/pdf/points-test-transitional.pdf

Overview of changes to the points test

Below is a summary of the changes to the points test

Age ranges

Eligibility for points is determined by the applicant's age on the day of making their application. If an applicant is aged between 45 and 49 years of age, they will be able to apply for a visa, but no points will be awarded for age:

Points	Age
25	18 - 24
30	25 – 32
25	33 – 39
15	40 – 44
0	45 – 49

Better English levels

For all skilled migration points tested visas, the threshold English language requirement will be competent English, which is a minimum score of 6 in each of the four components of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test or other language test specified by the Minister. While no points will be awarded for competent English, applicants who have obtained this score are able to apply for a visa as long as they meet the other threshold visa requirements.

Applicants who hold a valid passport and are citizens of the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, the United States of America or the Republic of Ireland are deemed to meet competent English language requirement.

To claim points for proficient or superior English language all applicants, including citizens of United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, the United States of America or the Republic of Ireland, will need to complete an English language test. The test must be completed before the visa application is lodged.

The points test awards points for English language ability as follows:

Points	Description of English language ability
20	Superior English (a score of at least 8 in each of the four components of the IELTS test, or equivalent standard in a specified test)
10	Proficient English (a score of at least 7 in each of the four components of the IELTS test, or equivalent standard in a specified test)

Skilled employment

Points will be awarded for employment in a skilled occupation, either in Australia or overseas. To claim points for skilled employment, the experience must be in an applicant's nominated occupation, or a closely related occupation. Where applicable, applicants can claim points for both Australian skilled employment and overseas skilled employment under the points test.

Applicants will be awarded points based on demonstration of a verifiable skilled employment history undertaken in the last 10 years as follows:

Australian skilled employment in their nominated occupation or a closely related occupation.

Points	Length of employment
5	One year
10	Three years
15	Five years
20	Eight years

Overseas skilled employment in their nominated occupation or a closely related occupation.

Points	Length of employment
5	Three years
10	Five years
15	Eight years

Australian and overseas employment over the past ten years can be combined, however the maximum number of points that can be awarded for Australian or overseas employment experience or combinations of both is 20 points.

For the purpose of awarding points, the department considers skilled employment in the nominated occupation or a closely related occupation will comprise at least 20 hours employment per week. In determining whether an applicant's skilled employment is closely related to their nominated occupation, the department will take into consideration the occupations within one unit group classified under Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO). Further information about ANZSCO can be found on the department's website.

See: www.immi.gov.au/employers/anzsco/

Generally, applicants will be able to request an opinion about their skilled employment claims from the relevant assessing authority when seeking their skills assessment. For further information about this process, applicants should contact the relevant assessing authority.

See: www.immi.gov.au/asri/a-z.htm

The decision to award points for skilled employment remains with of the departmental case officer.

Educational qualifications

Points can only be awarded for the highest qualification attained.

Example: If an applicant is assessed as having completed a Bachelors Degree and a Doctorate Degree, they will only be able to claim points for the Doctorate Degree. The following table outlines the number of points awarded for an applicant's highest education qualification:

Points	Description of education qualifications
20	Doctorate Degree
15	At least a Bachelor Degree
10	Australian Diploma or trade qualification.
10	Award or qualification recognised by the assessing authority in the assessment of the skilled occupation

To claim points for a qualification obtained overseas, the qualification will need to be recognised as being of a standard comparable to the relevant Australian level qualification. Generally, applicants will be able to request an opinion on their qualification claims from the relevant assessing authority when seeking their skills assessment. For further information about this process, applicants should contact the relevant assessing authority.

See: www.immi.gov.au/asri/a-z.htm

An applicant may also be able to claim points for a qualification not related to their nominated occupation, for example they may hold a trade qualification related to their nominated occupation and an unrelated Bachelor degree. If the assessing authority conducting their skills assessment cannot provide an opinion on the non related qualification, applicants should contact the Vocational Education Training and Assessment Services (VETASSESS). VETASSESS is the national assessing authority for a broad range of management, administration, professional and associate professional occupations.

See: www.vetassess.com.au

The decision to award points for Educational qualification remains with of the departmental case officer.

Australian study requirement

Five points can also be claimed by those applicants who have studied in Australia to use the same period of study to claim points for their qualification and for meeting the Australian study requirement.

To claim points for an Australian qualification, the qualification must have been undertaken while the applicant was in Australia and it must have been completed as the result of a course of study that was at least two academic years (that is 92 weeks as registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS)). Study must be closely related to the applicant's nominated skilled occupation.

Study in a regional area

Five points can also be claimed for those applicants who satisfy the Australia study requirement while studying in regional Australia.

Completion of a Professional Year

Five points can also be claimed for those applicants who complete an approved Professional Year in their nominated occupation or a closely related skilled occupation.

Credentialed Community language

Five points can also be claimed for those applicants who meet the requirements for credentialed community language.

The points test awards points to applicants accredited at the para-professional level or above by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) as either a translator or interpreter. Applicants will no longer be able to claim points for designated language on the basis of having obtained a qualification from a university where instruction was in that language.

Partner skills

Five points can also be claimed for those where the primary applicant's partner satisfies the threshold criteria for a visa.

To claim partner points the primary applicant's partner will need to meet the following criteria:

- be included on the same visa application as the primary applicant
- not be an Australian permanent resident or citizen
- be less than 50 years old at the time of application
- nominate an occupation on the same SOL as the primary applicant, and be assessed by the relevant assessing authority as having suitable skills for the occupation
- have competent English
- have been employed in a skilled occupation for at least 12 months in the 24 months before the application is lodged, or completed the Australian Study Requirement.

State or Territory nomination and designated area sponsorship

Points will be awarded for nominated sponsorship as follows:

Points	Description of sponsorship
5	Nomination by a state or territory government under a state migration plan, for the purposes of a subclass 176 or 886 application
10	Nomination by a state or territory government under a state migration plan, or sponsorship by an eligible relative, to a designated area for the purposes of a subclass 487 or subclass 475 Skilled – Regional Sponsored application.

Eligible family members can sponsor applicants on a subclass 176 or subclass 886 visa, however no points are awarded.

The points test will award points to applicants for a subclass 475 or subclass 487 who are sponsored to a designated area by an eligible family member or a state or territory government under a state migration plan. Holders of either of these provisional sponsored skilled migration visas may be eligible for a Skilled Regional (Residence) visa (subclass 887) after meeting certain eligibility criteria.

Summary of points awarded

Below is a summary of points awarded for each requirement.

Factor	Description	Points
Age	18–24	25
	25–32	30
	33–39	25
	40–44	15
	45–49	0
English language * or equivalent standard in a specified test)	Competent English - IELTS 6*	0
	Proficient English - IELTS 7*	10
	Superior English - IELTS 8*	20
Australian or overseas skilled employment in nominated occupation or a closely related occupation undertaken in the past 10 years Note: Maximum points that can be awarded for any combination of Australian or overseas skilled employment is 20 points	One year in Australia	5
	Three years in Australia	10
	Five years in Australia	15
	Eight years in Australia	20
	Three years overseas	5
	Five years overseas	10
	Eight years overseas	15
Qualifications (Australian or recognised overseas)	Australian Diploma or trade qualification or other qualification recognised by a relevant Assessing Authority	10
	At least a Bachelor degree	15
	Doctorate	20
Australian study requirement	Minimum two years full-time (Australian study requirement)	5
Study in a regional area	Must meet the Australian Study Requirement while studying in a regional area	5
Professional Year	Completion of a recognised Professional Year	5
Credentialed Community language	NAATI accreditation	5
Partner skills	Primary applicants partner meets threshold requirements for skilled migration visa	5
Nomination by state/territory government (subclass 176 or 886 visa)	Nomination by a state or territory government under a state migration plan	5
Designated area sponsorship or nominated by state/territory government (subclass 475 or 487 visa)	Sponsorship by an eligible relative living in a designated area or nomination by a state or territory government under a state migration plan	10