



Health & Character Clearances for GSM Applications

PRIORITY GROUP 2 (STATE MIGRATION PLAN)

All applicants who meet the following eligibility criteria (Points 1 & 2 below) are invited to proceed to obtain health and character clearances now.

1. The application was lodged under one of the following visa subclasses:
 - Skilled – Independent (Migrant) visa (subclass 175) pre 1/7/2010,
 - Skilled – Sponsored (Migrant) visa (subclass 176),
 - Skilled – Regional Sponsored (Provisional) visa (subclass 475),
 - Skilled – Regional Sponsored (Provisional) visa (subclass 487),
 - Skilled - Independent (Residence) visa (subclass 885) pre 1/7/2010, or
 - Skilled – Sponsored (Residence) visa (subclass 886), AND
2. A case officer has not yet contacted you about the application.

PRIORITY GROUP 3 APPLICANTS

All applicants who meet the following eligibility criteria (Points 3 & 4 below) are invited to proceed to obtain health and character clearances now.

3. The application was lodged under one of the following visa subclasses between **15 January 2009 and 30 June 2010**:
 - Skilled – Independent (Migrant) visa (subclass 175),
 - Skilled – Sponsored (Migrant) visa (subclass 176), or
 - Skilled – Regional Sponsored (Provisional) visa (subclass 475) ,

OR

The application was lodged under one of the following visa subclasses between **6 November 2009 and 30 September 2010**:

 - Skilled – Regional Sponsored (Provisional) visa (subclass 487),
 - Skilled - Independent (Residence) visa (subclass 885), or
 - Skilled – Sponsored (Residence) visa (subclass 886), AND
4. A case officer has not yet contacted you about the application.

Priority Group 2 and Priority Group 3 applicants who meet all respective eligibility criteria may choose to initiate health and character clearances ahead of their application being assigned to a case officer for consideration and a formal request for these being made.

Under the current priority processing arrangements it is likely that most applications above will be considered by a case officer within the validity period of medical and character clearances, should these clearances be undertaken now.

When providing these clearances, Form 80: *Personal particulars for character assessment* (<http://www.immi.gov.au/allforms/pdf/80.pdf>), should also be submitted.

In addition, if an applicant has not already done so they should also update the Department on any change to their circumstances. To do so see information below: *Change in circumstances*

All other Priority Group 3 and Priority Group 4 applicants should not yet provide health and character clearances.

Applicants not from a 'low risk' country

It is important to recognise that all applications are considered on their individual characteristics. As such, processing timeframes will vary in regards to whether an application is considered to be 'low risk' or 'high risk'.

Applicable clearances, forms or related information may be necessary and will be formally requested by a case officer on a case-by-case basis once an application has been considered.

In our experience, processing of an application after allocation to a case officer may be lengthy (greater than 6 months) for people who are nationals of, or have resided for more than 12 months in, a 'high risk' country. We would strongly encourage these clients to wait until a formal request for these clearances is made by a case officer. By doing so, additional costs for replacement health and character clearances may be prevented.

'High risk' countries are those which are not included in either of these lists:

- <http://www.immi.gov.au/visitors/tourist/evisitor/eligibility.htm>, and
- <http://www.immi.gov.au/visitors/tourist/976/eligibility.htm>.

Priority 3 applications not in this date range

Applications lodged outside of this date range should not yet proceed with health and character clearances.

In this case applicants can periodically check the GSM Processing Update by emailing gsm.processing@immi.gov.au as the date ranges for each visa subclass will change.

Benefit of providing Health and Character clearances now

Initiating all necessary health and character clearances now is likely to enable an application to be considered in a quicker timeframe once it is allocated to a case officer.

It may mean that a decision can be made when first considered, without a case officer needing to request any further documentation, as considerable delays can be encountered in requesting and receiving information.

It is important to understand that providing these clearances does not guarantee immediate processing of an application. Applications will continue to be processed in line with the *priority processing arrangements* outlined below.

In undertaking these clearances now, an applicant should be mindful that processing arrangements may change over time and that any such changes may impact on the validity of a clearance and the order of assessment of applications. An applicant may be required to repeat a clearance at their cost in the event of a change to the current application allocation arrangements.

Priority Processing Arrangements

Applications are being processed according to the prioritisation arrangements set by the Minister.

Applicants whose applications have a nominated occupation that appears on an active State Migration Plans – Priority Group 2 are being processed ahead of all Priority Group 3 applications, and Priority Group 3 applications are being processed ahead of Priority Group 4 applications.

Once all Priority Group 2 applications have been allocated, Priority Group 3 applications will continue to be allocated for consideration in date of lodgement order. This process will be repeated for Priority Group 4 applications in due time.

To determine which priority group your application falls into please read the information on the department's website at:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/updated-priority-processing-arrangements.htm>

As mentioned, changes may be made to priority processing arrangements over time and in such circumstances processing timeframes may vary. Information on changes to processing arrangements will be available at www.immi.gov.au and by sending a blank email to gsm.processing@immi.gov.au.

Validity of Health and Character clearances

Priority Group 2 and Priority Group 3 applicants who meet the abovementioned criteria may choose to initiate new clearances given the likelihood of their application being considered in coming months.

All other applicants should not yet proceed to obtain new clearances.

Rather, Migration Agents and applicants should monitor this advice until such time as the relevant date range for lodgement of an application is specified.

Applicants who choose to disregard this advice risk needing to repeat these clearances.

Priority Group 4 applicants

The Department is not yet in a position to advise when Priority Group 4 applications are likely to be considered, other than that this is likely to occur in the 2011-2012 Migration Program Year and after all Priority Group 2 and Priority Group 3 applications have been considered.

As such, all Priority Group 4 applicants should not yet undertake health and character clearances.

Priority Group 4 applicants are encouraged to periodically check the General Skilled Migration (GSM) Processing Update by emailing gsm.processing@immi.gov.au as the date ranges for each visa subclass and Priority Group will change over time.

Change in circumstances

If the circumstances of any family members or dependents have changed since lodgement of an application and DIAC is yet to be notified, completion of the relevant form(s) is required. See <http://www.immi.gov.au/contacts/visa-enquiries/change.htm>

eVisa applicants should upload any relevant documentation concerning the change of circumstance (eg birth or marriage certificate) to the web-browser.

Paper visa applicants should email gsm.documents@immi.gov.au with the relevant form(s) and supporting documentation.

Questions

Please note that specific guidance on whether or not an applicant should obtain these clearances now can only be provided once the application is allocated to a case officer for consideration, as a detailed assessment is required.