



Business Council of
British Columbia

**Labour market needs,
Immigration programs,
Foreign credential
recognition & Employment**

**- LIFE in Ireland,
New Zealand,
Australia and Canada**

March 2007

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Foreword

Skills shortage is a global phenomenon, especially acute amongst many western countries. The recruitment and retention of immigrant and migrant workers have been viewed by most employers and their governments as a potential, indeed necessary, source of labour supply.

Given prevailing demographic trends and forecast economic conditions over the medium term, skills shortage will continue and immigration is seen by many countries around the world as a possible panacea. In Canada, particularly in British Columbia, we are currently living in this context and looking at all sources of potential labour talent – youth, aboriginals and immigrants – to fill the skills and labour shortage gap. Employers want and need immigrant workers now and into the foreseeable future. They want to be able to access foreign workers sooner and quicker. In the present Canadian circumstance, this is a challenge; but it is also a universal problem as many other countries are competing to achieve the same results.

With this background, the Business Council of British Columbia decided to undertake an investigation of comparable countries – Ireland, New Zealand, and Australia – all with similar characteristics such as language, work ethic, culture and desirable place to live and, competitors for similar talent. Yet, this is a friendly competition in that each of the aforementioned countries has looked at the other in terms of immigration and recruitment of migrant workers. In New Zealand and Australia especially, each country has committed to making the process easier for their respective employers to recruit and prospective migrants to apply – through streamlining of procedures, creation of new programs and clarity of information. Additionally, it is interesting to note that both Ireland and New Zealand have small populations similar to that of British Columbia. Australia is a confederation of states similar to Canada with attendant challenges over jurisdictional issues such as credentials recognition, licensing to work and immigration itself. The objective of our investigation is to learn what we can – through the lens of the employer community – from the various systems in these countries regarding Labour market needs, Immigration programs, Foreign credential recognition and Employment – LIFE – in terms of policies, programs and practices and to select the best for consideration and possible application here in Canada.

In this regard, we would like to thank the BC Ministry of Economic Development and Human Resource and Social Development Canada, Foreign Credential Recognition program for the financial assistance to undertake this international comparative study. In particular, we want to thank Mark Gillis and Benton Mischuk, both from the Ministry of Economic Development – the former for getting us started on this investigation and the latter for guidance throughout the study. We are grateful to officials at Human Resources and Social Development Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada both in Vancouver and the National Capital Region for their assistance in this undertaking. We would like to also thank the many individuals who agreed to see us for this study – too



numerous to mention individually here but are cited in the list of interviewees. We would like to specifically acknowledge the help of the following in getting us connected with key contacts in their respective countries: Anne Chappaz, Consul-General for New Zealand in Vancouver; Don Badman, Department of Labour, New Zealand Immigration Service in Los Angeles; Kevin Lamb, Consul for Australia in Vancouver; and the special effort of Christine Pearce, Principal Migration Officer, Australian High Commission in Ottawa.

We could not have reached all of those that we did in each country without the personal attention and engagement of the following individuals to whom we are most grateful for making or assisting with the local appointments and introductions:

- In Ireland: Sean Murray, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
- In New Zealand: Grayson Rowse, Department of Labour
- In Australia: Nic Jonsson and Sarah Carrigan, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations; and Janet Hartmann, Department of Immigration and Citizenship

In each country visited, we very much appreciated the cooperation and generosity of time provided by those with whom we met in the government departments, the non-government bodies and the private sector. It was our good fortune that they were all very accommodating, forthcoming and helpful. At the time of each country visit, it appeared that we were on the cusp of change ~ in Ireland, in New Zealand and in Australia. As current as we were (and are), changes and contemplation of changes continue in those countries and in Canada. Nevertheless, we offer this report ~ LIFE as we know it at the time of our on-site interviews (and writing), to inform the public policy discussions around immigration and foreign credential recognition.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the substantial contribution of Karen Graham, Senior Policy Analyst with the Business Council of BC, in the preparation of this report.

Needless to say, the opinions expressed in this report are ours alone and do not purport to represent any official views, positions or policies of organizations in the countries covered. Comments and other feedback are most welcome.

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Executive Summary

In brief, this project seeks to investigate the leading competitive models for integrated labour market information, immigration programs, foreign credential recognition and employment opportunities, select the best elements of these from a British Columbia perspective, and make recommendations to streamline and integrate the skilled immigration process at the national and provincial levels.

The Business Council of BC, with the financial assistance of the British Columbia Ministry of Economic Development, Economic Strategies Branch, and HRSDC Foreign Credential Recognition Program undertook to investigate the opportunities, best practices and lessons learned elsewhere for streamlining BC and Canada's skilled immigration system. The parameters of the investigation were to include a three-country comparative study of Ireland, New Zealand and Australia, considering the leading skilled migration programs, and highlighting key elements uncovered in each, from the perspective of the employer.

The investigation of each country, and the organization of the information in this report, was conducted with reference to the four essential elements of each immigration/migration system (LIFE):

- **Labour Market Needs** - the way in which employers' needs are reflected and incorporated into labour market analysis and planning, and in turn how these are expressed in the skilled migration system.
- **Immigration Programs** - the principal skilled/economic permanent and temporary programs operated in each country with an orientation to employer recruitment of skilled migrants.
- **Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR)** - the way in which credentials or qualifications assessment and recognition is conducted and how it enters into the immigration decision.
- **Employment** - the role that a job opportunity plays in the immigration process.



Findings - Immigration program summaries

Ireland Skilled Migration System Summary

	<i>Salary</i>	<i>Qualification/ Skill Level</i>	<i>EU Wide Labour Market Test</i>	<i>On Occupation Shortage List</i>
Green Card	> €60,000	Higher skilled	Not required	Not required
Green Card	€30,000 - €60,000	Higher skilled	Not required	Must be on list Limit on number of Permits
Work Permit	€30,000 +	Moderate / higher skilled	Required- 3 days advertising EU wide	Not required (but subject to Ineligible List)
Work Permit	< €30,000	Lower skilled	Required - 3 days advertising EU wide	Limited number of occupations (subject to those on Ineligible List)

New Zealand Skilled Migration System Summary

	<i>Points Based</i>	<i>Long Term Shortage List</i>	<i>Labour Market Test</i>	<i>Path to Permanent Residence</i>
Skilled Migrant Category (permanent)	Yes	Bonus Points available	Not if occupation on Immediate or Long Term Shortage Lists	Yes, immediate upon approval
Work to Residence (temporary)	No	Not required	May be required	Can apply after two years
Employer Accreditation (temporary)	No	Not required	Conducted by local Dept. of Labour branch	Can apply after two years

Australia Skilled Migration System Summary

	<i>Points Based</i>	<i>On Skill Shortage List</i>	<i>Labour Market Test</i>	<i>Path to Permanent Residence</i>
General Skilled Migration – Skilled Independent (permanent)	Yes	Must be on SOL, may be on MODL	Not if on SOL or MODL	Yes, immediate upon approval
Employer Nomination (permanent)	No	Must be on ENSOL	Not if on SOL/ENSOL	Yes, immediate upon approval
Temporary Business (Long Stay) “457”	No	Occupation/Min. Salary List is gazetted	Not if on Gazetted List	Not directly, but possible
Labour Agreement (temp or permanent)	No	Not required	Required	If temporary, not directly



Canada Skilled Migration System Summary

	<i>Points Test</i>	<i>Labour Market Test</i>	<i>Path to Permanent Residence</i>
Permanent Skilled Worker Program	Yes	Not required	Yes, immediate upon approval
Temporary Foreign Worker Program	No	Required - min 7 days on Job Bank if on BC/AB occupations under pressure lists Two weeks if not on lists	Yes, expedited via PNP or via onshore Skilled Worker application
BC Provincial Nominee Program	No	Not required - priority occupation list developed by PNP officials	Yes, immediate upon approval

Best Practices

The following areas of global best practice were observed in each country and centre on the following themes:

- Responsiveness/Competitiveness
- Labour market/employer needs in the permanent migration system
- Retention of skilled migrants
- Qualifications Frameworks for FCR
- Employer oriented program goals

Recommendations

British Columbia

1. Produce one set of labour market information for BC
2. Offer a “one-stop shop” for both permanent and temporary foreign workers
3. Accelerate employer accreditation
4. Accredite industry associations and Chambers of Commerce as eligible employers
5. Establish a Qualifications Framework for BC

Canada

6. Increase flow, reduce clog, and provide clarity
7. Reflect labour market needs in the permanent Skilled Worker program
8. Increase flexibility of the Temporary Foreign Worker program
9. Develop strategic Labour Agreements
10. Develop Occupations Under Pressure Lists across Canada
11. Develop and formalize Immigration Officer outreach function
12. Increase prominence of Foreign Credential Recognition in the migration process
13. Accelerate national harmonization of regulatory standards
14. Begin work on a Qualifications Framework for Canada



General

15. Improve quality and timeliness of information
16. Establish service standards

The implementation of most, if not all of the above, will not only lead to an improved system for employers seeking foreign workers but also better management of expectations on the part of employers and prospective foreign workers.

List of Abbreviations

General

FCR	Foreign Credential Recognition
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
LMI	Labour Market Information

Ireland

DETE	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
EU	European Union (For this project, the term EU is intended to include the additional countries of the European Economic Area or EEA and Switzerland, for the purpose of free movement of labour within the EU by nationals of these states.)
EU-10	The ten states (Eastern European countries plus Malta and Cyprus) that acceded to the European Union on May 1, 2004.
FAS	National training and employment authority
Forfas	National policy advisory board for enterprise, trade and science & technology
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

New Zealand

DOL	Department of Labour
EOI	Expression of Interest
ITA	Invitation to Apply
ISSL	Immediate Skill Shortage List
LTSSL	Long Term Skill Shortage List
NZCO	New Zealand Classification of Occupations
NZIS	New Zealand Immigration Service (within DOL)
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
QRS	Qualifications Recognition Service (within NZQA)

Australia

AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ASCO	Australian Standard Classification of Occupations
ASRI	Australian Skills Recognition Information
CEP	Country Education Profiles
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship (formerly DIMA - Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs)
ENSOL	Employer Nomination Scheme Occupation List
GSM	General Skilled Migration (refers to Skilled Independent only)
IOO	Industry Outreach Officer (Industry Outreach Office)
MODL	Migration Occupations in Demand List
NOOSR	National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition
PASA	Pre-Application Skills Assessment
ROO	Regional Outreach Officer (Regional Outreach Office)
SOL	Skilled Occupations List
TRA	Trades Recognition Australia
VETASSESS	Vocational Education and Training Assessment Services

Canada

CBSA	Canadian Border Services Agency
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CICIC	Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials
COPS	Canadian Occupational Projection System
HRSDC	Human Resources and Social Development Canada
ICES	International Credential Evaluation Service
IRPA	Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
LMO	Labour Market Opinion
NOC	National Occupation Classification
PNP	Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP - with reference to BC only)
TFW	Temporary Foreign Worker program



A. *Introduction*

Canada, like many western countries, is presently experiencing a shortage of skilled workers in a variety of occupational fields. In British Columbia, the skills shortage situation is expected to continue beyond 2010. By the end of the decade, demographic forecast suggests that the number of those approaching retirement (age 55-64) will exceed the number of potential new entrants into the work force (age 15-24). With prevailing demographic trends and economic outlook, immigrants are projected to account for two-thirds of the province's population growth by 2025. Particularly in western Canada where skills shortages are acute, employers are busily seeking solutions to their immediate and future labour needs – youth, aboriginals and immigrants. International recruitment for skilled migrants has become a leading source of skilled labour. However, employers are finding that their needs are not being met quickly enough for bringing in skilled workers, either on a temporary or permanent basis. In addition, employers seeking workers overseas are finding that there is global competition for top talent, and that Canada is but one choice among many as a destination country for prospective immigrants. From the immigrants' perspective, lack of credential recognition is inhibiting their ability to arrive “job-ready” to work at their level of training in skilled occupations. All of these factors provide the impetus to look to other countries to learn how they are responding to similar pressures and trends in the area of skilled migration.

The Business Council of British Columbia is concerned with the present and forecast skills shortage in the British Columbia economy, and is keenly interested in engaging in the evolving public policy dialogue around skilled migration as a source of labour at both the provincial and federal levels. By way of background, the Business Council of BC, formed in 1966, is an association representing over 200 large and medium-sized enterprises engaged in business in British Columbia. Our members are drawn from all major sectors of the provincial economy, including forest products, mining, manufacturing, transportation, agri-food, telecommunications, information technology, financial services, energy, tourism, retail,



construction, healthcare, education and the professions. Taken together, the corporate members and the associations affiliated with the Business Council are responsible for approximately one quarter of all jobs in British Columbia.

The skills shortages experienced particularly in western Canada in many skilled occupations, from the professions to the trades, have prompted some recent government efforts aimed at streamlining the various immigration options for recruiting overseas skilled workers. The British Columbia Ministry of Economic Development has enhanced staffing and raised the profile of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP). Over the past two years, Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) has developed the Foreign Credential Recognition Program to facilitate the assessment and recognition of credentials gained outside Canada. In September 2006, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) opened Temporary Foreign Worker Units in Vancouver and Calgary to provide information to employers and facilitate the entry process of temporary foreign workers into the country. And in November 2006, CIC announced regional lists of occupations under pressure for British Columbia and Alberta, to ease the labour market test requirements for employers seeking temporary foreign workers in these occupations.

Effectively streamlining the process of bringing skilled overseas workers to Canada, either temporarily or permanently, requires the coordination of four overarching elements in the immigration process: the labour market analysis that reflects employer need; the immigration process and the options under which skilled workers can enter Canada; the foreign credential recognition process; and the employment opportunity. The more integrated these elements are, the more effective the system can be in recruiting and placing skilled foreign workers in employment. Since immigration programs for skilled workers is becoming more of a joint federal-provincial matter, and since labour market shortages are being felt in various parts of the country, coordination of initiatives concerning immigration, credential recognition and labour market information between levels of government is essential to effectively streamline the process of foreign skilled worker integration. How can



these elements be further streamlined? Looking outside Canada can offer some ideas and options for the development of an integrated immigration system that is applicable within BC and across Canada.

In brief, this project seeks to investigate the leading competitive models for integrated labour market needs, immigration, foreign credential recognition and employment opportunities, select the best elements of these from a British Columbia perspective, and make recommendations to streamline and integrate the immigration process at the national and provincial levels.



B. Terms of Reference and Methodology

1. Terms of Reference

The Business Council of BC, with the financial assistance of the British Columbia Ministry of Economic Development, Economic Strategies Branch, and HRSDC, Foreign Credential Recognition program, undertook to investigate the opportunities, best practices and lessons learned elsewhere for streamlining BC and Canada's skilled immigration system. The parameters of the investigation were to include a three-country comparative study considering the leading skilled migration programs, highlighting key elements uncovered in each, from the perspective of the employer. These key elements were to be analysed with reference to the BC and Canadian context, and to lead to recommendations as to streamlining and integrating the relevant parts of Canada's immigration system to meet the needs of the labour market, and to improve the integration of skilled immigrants into the workforce. Thus, the investigation will focus on skilled worker/economic migration programs only: permanent and temporary; independent and employer-sponsored. The study will not cover other elements of immigration policy or programs such as the entrepreneur class, family class or humanitarian category. Our examination will deal with national and provincial skilled migration programs and practices.

The project commenced in November 2006 and concluded in March 2007 with this report.

2. Methodology

This investigation began with an environmental scan of those countries with comparable attributes to Canada, including: advanced economies experiencing skill shortages; high occupational standards and similar workplace culture; English as the predominant language of work and business; stable, desirable places to live, and a background as migrant-receiving countries.



The three countries selected for investigation are Ireland, New Zealand and Australia. Each country meets the above general criteria, and beyond that, each is in a slightly different set of circumstances with respect to skilled migration. These unique circumstances can be informative, if not instructive, to contribute to the policy discussion in Canada from a range of perspectives.

- **Ireland**, although relatively new to the “immigration game”, offers a clean slate for the purpose and type of skilled migration program it wishes to operate. In addition, it is a unitary (one national government) island state, although through membership in the European Union, has access to a vast labour market pool for higher and lower skilled workers. This has offered opportunities and placed obligations on Ireland as it expands its labour market in response to the booming economy.
- **New Zealand**, also a relatively small unitary island state, has developed some flexible and innovative migration policies. With its remote location and relatively small economy, and being a next door neighbour to Australia, New Zealand has become very proactive internationally in its migration policies to attract skilled migrants. New Zealand’s emphasis on skills relevant to the labour market combined with an equal emphasis on suitability for permanent settlement and building New Zealand society, make it especially relevant for comparison with Canada’s system.
- **Australia**, a confederation of states, is most like Canada in its multi-layers of jurisdiction over such areas as professional qualifications recognition and regional labour market needs. While Australia modeled its immigration points system on Canada’s in 1976, it has diverged more recently and now operates a vastly different weighted points system. Australia’s immigration response to skills shortages is premised first and foremost on the needs of the labour market and building for the future, followed closely by foreign qualifications assessment and recognition.

It is useful to reiterate at this stage that each of the above countries is presently undergoing (in Ireland’s case, has just undergone) reviews of its immigration system for the purpose of further refining and streamlining its ability to attract and rapidly integrate overseas skilled workers. For New Zealand and Australia, current parliamentary and policy reviews come after a relatively short period of time in operating the existing system. New Zealand last introduced major changes in 2002 and Australia in 2000, highlighting how rapidly the policy environment around skilled migration is evolving in these competitor countries. Further changes are expected within the next six to 18 months. Canada too is reviewing



elements of its immigration programs and practices, and therefore we emphasize that this report represents a “moment in time”, and findings and identification of best practices are presented with these systems operating in the current context and environment.

Preliminary desk research was supplemented by in-person, on-site interviews as follows (a schedule of interviews is listed in Appendix B):

- Ireland via United Kingdom - December 8 to 14, 2006
- New Zealand - February 12 to 16, 2007
- Australia - February 19 to 23, 2007

The investigation of each country, and the organization of the information in this report, was conducted with reference to the four essential elements of each immigration/migration system:

- **Labour Market Needs** - the way in which employers’ needs are reflected and incorporated into labour market analysis and planning, and in turn how these are expressed in the skilled migration system.
- **Immigration programs** - the principal skilled/economic permanent and temporary programs operated in each country with an orientation to employer recruitment of skilled migrants.
- **Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR)** - the way in which credentials or qualifications assessment and recognition is conducted and how it enters into the immigration decision. We distinguish between credential/qualification recognition, and licensing/registration, although each is relevant to the ability of the skilled migrant to work in the receiving country.¹
- **Employment** - the role that a job opportunity plays in the immigration process.

Findings for each element are presented in their respective country section of this report. Observations and Key Elements conclude each country section. Employer-sponsored

¹ In the Canadian context, these tend to be dependent on occupational groupings: “regulated”, “registered” and “non-regulated”, while elsewhere credential assessment and registration may apply to the same occupational group. For an explanation of these categories and the overall framework, see Business Council of BC study, *Foreign Credential Recognition for Skilled Immigrants to British Columbia: Looking Beneath, Above and Beyond* (February 2006).



programs, both permanent and temporary, are examined. The permanent independent skilled migration category is also investigated (as applicable) since it represents the largest single group of skilled migrants entering the labour market in every country studied. To reiterate, the orientation of the investigation is from the perspective of the employer community.

Key elements or initiatives are identified to highlight leading practices and processes within a given country's context. Generally, these have arisen as efforts to streamline and integrate skilled migration systems, and as responses to redress previous practices having negative unintended consequences. These initiatives form the basis of our identification of best practice for adaptation to British Columbia's and Canada's circumstances, and our recommendations.

In what follows, Sections C, D and E offer our findings for Ireland, New Zealand and Australia respectively, with reference to the four principal elements: Labour market needs, Immigration programs, Foreign credential recognition and Employment (LIFE). Section F provides a summary of Canada's present skilled migration system, including the BC Provincial Nominee Program. Section G contains our opinion of best practices and Section H offers our recommendations.

The following appendices contain supplemental information supporting or arising from our investigation:

- Appendix A – Comparative Policy Summary. A description of the principal policies and programs of each country.
- Appendix B – Interview Schedule.
- Appendix C – Comparative Case Studies. Four occupational case studies were selected to represent a range of jobs subject to different regulatory treatment, and are in absolute or relative shortage in each comparator country. Utilising our framework of three categories of “regulated”, “registered” and “non-regulated” occupations, we selected Registered Nurse, Physician, IT professional and Electrician to illustrate the various pathways to readiness to practice in each country.



- Appendix D - Comparison of Points Systems. Summary of the major categories of the points systems operated by the three countries that base their permanent migration selection on points.
- Appendix E - Comparative Service Standards. Where possible, the service standards for review and approval periods for each comparator country are presented.

C. Ireland

Ireland's migration system for skilled workers is premised entirely on the demand for labour. Until very recently, Ireland's migration flows were outward bound, primarily to North America. In recent years, Ireland has experienced net in-migration, as its economy has taken off and skilled jobs are in demand. The environment for migration to Ireland is influenced by its membership in the European Union (EU), as membership involves the participation in Europe's labour market mobility program (the free flow of citizens of one EU country to another). The 2004 expansion of the EU to include the "EU-10" (eight eastern European accession states plus Malta and Cyprus)² has dramatically affected Ireland's supply of labour, and consequently its economic migration policy.

Ireland introduced a new *Employment Permits Act* in 2006, which responded to these pressures and the needs of the strong Irish economy by instituting a new system for bringing in foreign skilled workers. The system links labour market information to the immigration process, and, particularly for some higher skilled occupations, requires evidence of appropriate qualifications and/or registration to be included with the application. The system is represented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Ireland Skilled Migration System Summary

	<i>Salary</i>	<i>Qualification/ Skill Level</i>	<i>EU Wide Labour Market Test</i>	<i>On Occupation Shortage List</i>
Green Card	> €60,000	Higher skilled	Not required	Not required
Green Card	€30,000 - €60,000	Higher skilled	Not required	Must be on list Limit on number of Permits
Work Permit	€30,000 +	Moderate / higher skilled	Required- 3 days advertising EU wide	Not required (but subject to Ineligible List)
Work Permit	< €30,000	Lower skilled	Required - 3 days advertising EU wide	Limited number of occupations (subject to those on Ineligible List)

² Ireland considers the free movement of labour to include nationals of all EU countries, plus the European Economic Area (EEA), which includes Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, plus Switzerland. For present purposes, the term EU will be used to include all countries with free labour mobility within Europe.

1. Labour Market Needs

Ireland's relatively new role as a net recipient of immigrants means that it has had to re-focus its resources, and in some cases establish new systems of data collection and analysis about its labour market. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) relies on a number of sources to assess the state of the labour market, and to forecast skills shortages. The development of accurate sector and occupation shortage lists is critical to the Irish system: the issuance of Green Cards and Work Permits depends on the designation of sectors and occupations as being in demand beyond the level that can be met by EU nationals.

Employers' skilled labour market needs are reflected in at least two ways in the Irish system: first, via direct overseas recruitment for the higher salaried Green Card occupations, which are generally not restricted to a list of occupational shortages; and second, through the skill shortage list for lower salaried Green Card occupations. DETE's list of occupations in demand is drawn from labour market research, analysis and forecasting conducted by several government and quasi-government agencies, including FAS (the national training and employment authority), Forfas (a policy advisory group for enterprise, trade and science & technology) and the independent Economic & Social Research Institute. The listing of eligible Green Card occupations at the €30,000 to €60,000 range is presented by economic sector, occupation and job title. The initial listing was subject to some concerns by employer stakeholders around the specificity of the job title, and the responsiveness of the list to changes in the labour market, particularly regarding the frequency of review and update of the list.³

At the Work Permit level, the free movement of workers throughout the EU and the recent accession of the EU-10 have had an enormous impact on the Irish labour market. Principally, young workers from Eastern Europe have arrived in Ireland to work in

³ To our knowledge at the time of writing, due to the recent implementation of the system this has not yet been determined.



hospitality, construction, and a range of other occupations. So far, the booming Irish economy has been able to absorb the influx.⁴ The availability of workers from within the EU for a range of occupations has strongly influenced policy at the Work Permit level, such that employers now find it very difficult to have Work Permits approved for non-EU workers in occupations with salaries below €30,000. Accompanying the guide to the new Work Permit scheme is a listing of ineligible job categories in occupations such as clerical staff, transport staff, some childcare workers, and several skilled and unskilled trades, indicating an absolute lack of need outside the EU in these occupations.

2. Immigration

Ireland's economic migration system is brand new, having only been instituted in February 2007, following the introduction of the *Employment Permits Act (2006)*.⁵ It was developed to replace administrative Working Visa/Working Authorisation arrangements for higher skilled occupations and Work Permits for lower skilled occupations. The new statutory system is intended to provide clarity, transparency and accountability to Ireland's economic migration program. In launching the new system, all applications are to be centrally assessed by DETE in Dublin.⁶ Foreign workers from visa-required countries must still apply for visas from the relevant embassy once their Green Cards or Work Permits have been approved. Either the employer or employee can apply for either scheme; and once granted, the Card or Permit resides with the employee. In Ireland, the term "visa" refers to the Irish immigration requirement that a national of a list of source countries requires a visa to enter Ireland (whether for skilled migration or any other purpose).

Ireland does not have a direct permanent migration system for skilled workers. All skilled foreign workers coming to Ireland are accepted on a two year temporary basis via either the

⁴ The Labour Market Policy Unit of DETE estimated Ireland's unemployment rate at 4.3 percent in December 2006, and forecasts the long term unemployment rate at 1.8 percent.

⁵ The outlines of the new program for implementation were just formulated and explained to us by various officials during our timely visit to Dublin in December 2006.

⁶ Under the previous system Irish embassies around the world assessed applications and issued (or denied) Working Visas or Working Authorisations to skilled foreign workers.



Green Card or Work Permit schemes. The application, when coming from the employer, must include details of employment, including the qualifications, experience and skills required for the position, as well as the qualifications of the foreign national concerned. The fee of €1,000 for the full two year term is payable by the applicant (either employer or employee). Beyond these common elements, each of these schemes has specific conditions attached.

a) Green Card

The first step for an Irish employer to bring in a skilled worker from outside the European Union under the Green Card system is to arrange terms of employment with an offshore prospective employee. The offer of employment must form part of the immigration application. No labour market test is required for Green Card applications. However, applications for salaries between €30,000 and €60,000 will only be accepted for occupations on the skill shortage list. Green Card applications for salaries over €60,000 are generally accepted by DETE regardless of the occupation. In the view of DETE, employers know their own needs best, and at these high-salary levels, they are competing for global talent in high-growth sectors of the Irish economy. After the initial two-year period, Green Cards may be renewed indefinitely. Green Card holders are expected to remain in employment with the initial employer for the first 12 months, and then are free to change employment provided that a new application is made.

b) Work Permit

Employers seeking foreign workers under the Work Permit scheme are required to pass an EU-wide labour market test. Employers requiring a skilled worker in the €30,000+ salary range whose occupation is not listed for acceptable Green Card occupations must pass this test before being granted a Work Permit. This has the effect of balancing two requirements: offering a means for employers to obtain needed skilled employment from a foreign source, while ensuring that vacancies for skilled jobs in Ireland which may not be designated as areas of skill shortage are filled first from the European labour market. After the initial two-year period, Work Permits are renewable for an additional three-year period, after which they



may be renewed for an indefinite period. The Work Permit holder is expected to remain in employment with the initial employer for the first 12 months, after which the holder may change employment provided that a new application is made and labour market test is undertaken.

Both schemes represent paths to naturalisation and permanent residence in Ireland, for Green Cards after two years and for Work Permits after the three-year renewal period. The current legislation does not contemplate a scheme or visa class under which a prospective migrant may be granted immediate permanent residence. This approach is partly a reflection of the recent dramatic change in migration flows for Ireland, and partly due to Ireland's conscious choice to manage its economic migration system to support employment demand and skills shortages.

Additional requirements for entry into Ireland under the new system include a security check. Part of the review conducted by the Department of Justice and Law Reform relates to the source country of the worker in terms of whether or not it is a visa-required country, and follows provisions of the *Immigration Act* with respect to exclusion or deportation of the foreign national applicant due to national security concerns. Health checks have not been specified as required for entry to Ireland. All non-EU nationals are required to register with the Garda National Immigration Bureau (Irish police force pertaining to immigration matters) upon arrival in Ireland.

3. Foreign Credential Recognition

The credentials or qualifications assessment and recognition process in Ireland is only indirectly linked to the economic migration system, with the exception of the medical professions.

For most Green Card occupations, the prospective foreign worker must possess the relevant skills, experience or qualifications that are required for the employment. These are assessed by DETE on the basis of the job description set out in the offer letter that must be



submitted as part of the application. The application must also contain documentary evidence of the employee's qualifications. These are not required to have been assessed by an Irish assessment authority, but in DETE's assessment, must meet the occupational requirements of the position.

For regulated fields, foreign workers must also have their education and employment credentials assessed by the relevant body, and become registered with the Irish authority. DETE's view in this area has been that such assessment and registration is a matter between the employer, employee and the registration body. However, the Green Card scheme has introduced specific requirements in the case of medical professionals. Foreign trained medical professionals are now required to submit with their Green Card application (or Work Permit application, depending on salary level and medical occupation) a copy of the registration with the relevant Irish authority, or a validation of their qualifications by that authority. In Ireland at present, most trades are not regulated, however methods for the assessment of foreign trades workers' qualifications have been established as part of the move to a qualifications framework-based system of recognising Irish and international training, education and skills (see Appendix C).

Foreign skilled workers may have their qualifications assessed for equivalency to Irish standards by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI). This body conducts assessments with reference to the National Framework of Qualifications, and to the standards that are quality assured by two awarding bodies: the Further Education & Training Awards Council (FETAC) which awards vocational qualifications; and the Higher Education & Training Awards Council (HETAC) which grants awards for college, technical institutes & other non university attainment. Universities are responsible for their own assessment and awards. All education and training in Ireland are mapped on the Framework, including major and minor awards attained in Ireland, as well as professional and international awards. All awards are represented as levels from one to ten, in terms of outcomes, competencies and skills.



For foreign workers, the assessment of their credentials with reference to a Qualifications Framework is beneficial as the equivalent level in Ireland is understood nationally, based on a single comparative frame of reference. This can provide certainty to both the employee and employer that the qualifications gained internationally are in fact what the employer is seeking, and will therefore be more likely to meet the requirements of a Green Card or Work Permit application.

4. Employment

If an Irish employer is seeking a candidate in a salary range between €30,000 and €60,000 for a skilled position, he or she must make several decisions before recruiting a foreign worker. First the employer must determine if the skilled position is listed as a “strategically important occupation” to Ireland and therefore eligible for a Green Card. If so, the employer need not attempt to recruit locally first, but may immediately begin recruiting internationally. If not, the position may be eligible for a Work Permit, however the employer must first pass a labour market test for local and European skilled labour. This test involves providing evidence with the Work Permit application that the vacancy has been posted for a minimum of three days with FAS (the national training and employment authority) which operates a web-based job posting service and is connected with the EURES employment network, and in local and national newspapers.

Once the candidate has been selected, both parties must provide relevant information as part of the application for either a Green Card or a Work Permit. After determining the scheme for which an employer is eligible to hire a foreign worker, an offer of employment is the first operational step in the immigration process. In both schemes, the application form must be signed by both the employer and employee. As suggested above, the matter of the suitability of the foreign worker for the position and any requirement to register with a professional body in Ireland is viewed by government as properly the responsibility of the employer and employee. However, the new economic migration system places more authority in DETE’s hands to accept or reject the candidate selected by the employer on the



basis of the qualifications, skills and experience he or she brings to the position as outlined by the employer.

Potential difficulties for the employer may arise with the structure of the new system when an employer wants to bring in a skilled worker from overseas in a field that is designated as highly skilled, but where the employer wishes to pay a lower salary. An example was provided relating to the growing financial services sector, where skills gaps have emerged in entry level positions. Employers may seek to recruit an entry-level employee in a skilled occupational category which is eligible for a Green Card, but at a salary level commensurate with an entry level position, which appears to be at variance with the requirements of the Green Card scheme, where both the occupational level and salary determine the approval of an overseas worker.⁷ The success of the system for cases such as this will likely depend in part on the flexibility of DETE in issuing a Green Card or Work Permit, and on the reputation and employment practices of the employer.

5. Observations and Key Elements

a) Observations

Taking into account the very recent launch of the new program (February 2007), we observe that Ireland has a very strong employment-oriented immigration system. The general approach of DETE is to not over-manage the system, particularly from the perspective of the employer. Among the Irish government representatives interviewed, the principal attitude was one of “employers know their own needs best”. This is reflected in the approach to the highest skilled and highest salary Green Card category, where employers are not required to pass a labour market test in occupations and sectors that are known to be globally competitive.

⁷ This example was raised by several organizations as a potential difficulty with the new system.



Ireland's approach to qualifications recognition has had a similar "employer is responsible" approach, in the sense that employers know what skills and qualifications they require and it is up to them to recruit the right candidate. However, a more formalized system appears to be emerging with the new Green Card scheme. Particularly for medical professions, including registered nurse and physician (reviewed in the case studies in Appendix C), a process for pre-arrival provisional registration is now in place. The employer community appears to be reasonably satisfied with the new system; indeed the only concerns expressed related to the interpretation of the Green Card rules when a job title and salary level appear to be at odds under the definition of eligibility.

Ireland's labour market situation is unique among the countries studied here, as the EU-10 and the free movement of labour principle have strongly affected segments of Ireland's lower skilled occupations. The policy response to the twin pressures of a strong, knowledge-based economy and a newly available potential labour market of 40 million people has also been unique: to link salary and occupational levels into the immigration program.

It is interesting to observe the interplay between labour market demand and type of permit in the €30,000 to €60,000 salary band. The division of this salary range between two types of permit allows DETE to make a distinction between those occupations that are in genuine skill shortage and those in which employers are lacking skilled workers. The list of eligible Green Card occupations suggests a high confidence level in the labour market information (LMI) indicating the ongoing skill shortage, as applicants do not need to pass a labour market test, and holders of Green Cards are eligible to renew indefinitely after two years. The Work Permit available at the same salary range offers recognition to employers of their difficulty in hiring workers in a given occupation and offers an option for overseas recruitment. However, the stricter conditions on the Work Permit (passing an EU-wide labour market test and renewal term of three years) signal that the occupation is not defined as being in shortage by the LMI conducted across the economy.



Of course, no data are available to report outcomes for migrants under the new economic migration program. In any event, indicators for Ireland's success would be substantially different from those for Canada, New Zealand and Australia since, first the objectives of the program do not include permanent settlement, and second all skilled migrants arriving in Ireland must already have secured employment.

b) Key Elements

1. **Labour market needs reflected in the migration program.** The various levels of Green Cards and Work Permits available reflect Ireland's labour market situation and takes account of the needs of its employers while remaining compliant with its European obligations to have an open labour market. LMI suggest that many lower skilled occupations are more than readily met by European workers, thus the response of the migration program has been to develop an ineligible list for a range of occupations where employers do not need to recruit internationally. On the other hand, there are skilled occupations in the €30,000- €60,000 salary range in significant shortage, and these are recognized through the listing of "strategically important occupations" that make them eligible for overseas recruitment under the relatively permissive terms of the Green Card.

2. **Ireland's qualifications assessment regime.** The qualifications assessment system has also been developed with employer needs in mind, although the procedure around overseas qualifications recognition does not appear to be fully formalized. On the one hand, the Irish system offers a well organized system of qualifications assessment for tertiary education, vocational training and professional qualifications gained elsewhere. On the other hand, other than medical professionals, there is no formal direction in the immigration process to have overseas qualifications assessed for equivalency to Irish standards. The Qualifications Framework is a complete and useful tool for mapping international education, skills and competencies to the levels of Irish qualifications and competencies, in terms that are understood by Irish employers.

D. New Zealand

New Zealand's relatively small size and remote location have not kept it from experiencing an economic boom and the attendant skills shortages over the past five years or more.⁸ However, New Zealand's geographic location means that it has to be very competitive internationally to draw skilled workers. Already having engaged in an immigration review within the last five years, New Zealand is again conducting a legislative, policy and procedural review of its migration programs to streamline the procedures for attracting skilled workers. In general, New Zealand's skilled migration system is underpinned by the country's labour market situation, although not to a specific requirement of a job offer, and operates its general Skilled Migrant Category on a points system. It is interesting to note that the New Zealand Immigration Service (NZIS) resides inside the Department of Labour (DOL). A summary of the major features of New Zealand's skilled migration system is shown below in Table 2.

Table 2: New Zealand Skilled Migration System Summary

	<i>Points Based</i>	<i>Long Term Shortage List</i>	<i>Labour Market Test</i>	<i>Path to Permanent Residence</i>
Skilled Migrant Category (permanent)	Yes	Bonus Points available	Not if occupation on Immediate or Long Term Shortage Lists	Yes, immediate upon approval
Work to Residence (temporary)	No	Not required	May be required	Can apply after two years
Employer Accreditation (temporary)	No	Not required	Conducted by local Dept. of Labour branch	Can apply after two years

1. Labour Market Needs

New Zealand's recruitment of skilled workers is guided by highlighting those areas of the labour market that are in skill shortage. The Immediate Skill Shortage List (ISSL) and the

⁸ New Zealand's unemployment rate in December 2006 was 3.7% (Statistics New Zealand, *Household Labour Force Survey*, December 2006 quarter), and over 20% of employers are finding it difficult to find skilled staff (down considerably from the peak of 61% in 2004), New Zealand Department of Labour, *Skills in the Labour Market* November 2006.



Long Term Skill Shortage List (LTSSL) signal those occupations that are most needed in the economy. The lists for the Skilled Migrant program are principally developed by stakeholder consultation sessions and employer interviews by NZIS officials, and supplemented by labour market research and analysis by the Labour Market Information Service. Both lists are reviewed and updated every six months. The NZIS notes that in the course of consultation to update the lists, employers are anxious to have key occupations in their sectors added to the LTSSL to streamline their overseas recruitment. However officials also point out that there are additional ways to recruit foreign workers that do not require the presence of an occupation on the Long Term List (described below in the Immigration section): the List is intended to function more as a guide and facilitator for skilled migration than as a hard and fast listing of occupations acceptable for entry.

The Immediate Skill Shortage List contains those occupations in New Zealand that are experiencing regional shortages, and thus do not require a labour market test for an employer seeking to recruit an overseas skilled worker. The absence of an occupation from this list does not preclude an employer from seeking an overseas skilled worker, but in most of these cases, the employer must provide evidence that no New Zealander was available to fill the position. From the perspective of overseas workers, if their occupation is on the ISSL, even if they apply for permanent skilled migration to New Zealand they will only be granted a temporary work visa or permit. The occupations on the Immediate List do not convey a structural need in the economy, and approvals are therefore time-limited.

The ISSL publication includes a range of supplemental information that is useful to both employers and prospective migrants. In addition to the job title and New Zealand Classification of Occupations (NZCO) number, the List includes the recommended standard for applicants with an offer of employment (some combination of qualification, relevant experience and New Zealand recognition or registration), and the areas of regional skill shortage around the country.



The Long Term Skill Shortage List contains those occupations that are considered areas of absolute skill shortage in New Zealand. Applicants under the permanent Skilled Migrant Category do not need to pass a labour market test if their occupation is on the LTSSL. Those applicants with occupations on the LTSSL are eligible for bonus points in their migration application for relevant qualifications, work experience and a New Zealand job offer. The bonus points offered in these occupations improve the applicant's chances of meeting the minimum point threshold set by NZIS. This is also the only way in which Skilled Migrant Category applicants can be invited to apply for immediate permanent residence.

The LTSSL publication includes a range of information that is useful for both employer and prospective migrant, including occupational group, title and NZCO code, and also requirements for eligibility to claim bonus points for the relevant qualification (the level of qualification including New Zealand equivalence, and any registration with a professional body). The online version also contains links to a fuller description of the position, registration body information, industry association contact information and sector-specific information for job-seekers. Thus the lists function not only to signal job market needs, but also to integrate those needs into the immigration process (via the bonus points available for LTSSL occupations), and to provide pathways of information to occupation-specific research, registration requirements and contact information for offshore applicants.

2. Immigration

The New Zealand skilled migration system is comprised of a number of permanent and temporary programs designed to facilitate the migrant who wishes to relocate to New Zealand, and the employer who is seeking overseas workers. The overall program is structured around the needs of the labour market and the way in which New Zealand wants to build its society. Permanent residence approval is based in part on the migrant's (and his or her dependents') prospects for settling in the country. The various programs reflect the flexibility of New Zealand's system for meeting employers' needs through migration and the



needs of migrants upon arrival to begin work in their field of training and experience. The three principal categories relating to skilled migration to New Zealand are reviewed here. In New Zealand, the terms “visa” and “permit” refer primarily to whether the applicant is onshore or offshore. An offshore applicant is issued a visa (an invitation under one of the migration categories), while a permit refers to permission to stay once the migrant is in New Zealand.

a) Skilled Migrant Category

The Skilled Migrant Category is the only points tested category in New Zealand’s migration program, and has a target of 27,000 applicants annually, representing 60% of all permanent residence applications. Overseas applicants lodge an Expression of Interest (EOI) online via NZIS’s website (or may submit a paper application). The prospective applicant can complete a Skilled Migrant Category Quick Check: a web-based self-assessment to determine if he or she meets the minimum number of 100 points prior to lodging and paying for an EOI. NZIS reviews all EOIs submitted every two weeks, and automatically selects from the “pool” those EOIs with scores of 140 or more for review leading to an Invitation to Apply for residence. Those EOIs with scores between 100 and 140 and have a job offer in New Zealand are selected based on point ranking and in quantities to meet New Zealand’s needs. Other criteria are set from time to time by the Minister of Immigration to meet specific labour market priorities. EOIs remain in the pool for up to six months and may be selected in subsequent rounds based on labour market priorities. The pool system was instituted in the last round of migration policy reforms in 2002 to clear the application backlog that had developed.

The points total achieved by an applicant is based on five criteria:

- skilled employment - either in an ongoing position as a temporary worker or holding an offer of employment,
- qualifications
- work experience
- family in New Zealand
- age (55 years or under)



Variable points are available for length of work experience, level of qualifications and age category. Bonus points are available for employment, work experience or qualifications in areas of absolute skill shortage or in identified areas of growth. The absolute skill shortages are those indicated on the LTSSL, and growth areas are designated at present to include three sectors: information and communications technologies, biotechnology, and the creative industries.

Once an applicant is selected and invited to apply, he or she must supply evidence of the claims made in the EOI as to qualifications, work experience, nationality and any other information NZIS requires. At this time, applicants must also prove they are in good health (based on examinations by Panel Doctors approved by NZIS, applicants must supply health and x-ray certificates), and of good character (applicants must supply recent police certificate). Depending on the country of origin, applicants must provide evidence of minimum proficiency in English evidenced by an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) certificate. For the permanent Skilled Migrant Category, these requirements are conducted “up-front” as part of the overall application to live and work in New Zealand. The other two temporary categories described below separate the processes of approval to work in the country from the approval to reside permanently in the country.

b) Work to Residence/Residence from Work

Work to Residence is a broad category which has a path to permanent residence for skilled migrants who are: presently working temporarily in New Zealand and wish to stay (the Residence from Work component); who are offshore applying for a work permit and whose occupations are on the LTSSL; and those who have worked for two years in New Zealand under the Talent (Accredited Employers) Work Policy. In every case, overseas skilled workers must hold a valid work permit while in New Zealand, and on this basis after two years they may apply for residence via the Work to Residence category.



From an employer perspective, Work to Residence is beneficial as a route to converting a temporary foreign worker to a permanent resident who is eligible to work indefinitely in New Zealand. This does not preclude the worker from changing employers, but it adds a measure of certainty to the employer that the employee has the intention to stay in New Zealand. In addition, for employers who need workers on a temporary basis (see Employer Accreditation below), the application process is less onerous for the applicant (in all cases the skilled migrant) and less comprehensive than it is for a permanent migrant and therefore less time before NZIS approves the application. The various temporary programs require less stringent tests, therefore employers' needs can be met more quickly. The character and health checks are only applicable as the skilled migrant applies for residence via the Work to Residence category.

From a skilled foreign worker perspective, the Work to Residence category is most useful for those who are already working temporarily in New Zealand and who wish to apply for permanent residence after a period of time in the country. Work to Residence offers a pathway to permanence so that even if a skilled migrant was only able to, or only wished to, make an initial temporary commitment to living and working in the country, he or she can apply to stay indefinitely after having experienced work and life in New Zealand. At that point, the remaining character, medical and (if still applicable), English language proficiency checks are conducted as part of the Work to Residence application.

c) Employer Accreditation

Employer Accreditation allows New Zealand employers to recruit skilled foreign workers on a temporary or Work to Residence basis. Once the employer has been accredited by NZIS on the basis of sound financial position, good human resource practices and other criteria, and the local Department of Labour office has conducted a labour market analysis of regional shortage of skills on a case by case basis as employers apply to become accredited, the employer may recruit overseas skilled workers, either immediately or over a period of time without undergoing a labour market test each time. The accreditation is valid for one



year, is renewable by the employer on an annual basis thereafter, and is valid for multiple employees for the duration of each accreditation period. There is no prescribed ceiling on the number of workers an accredited employer may recruit. Once the employer has recruited prospective skilled foreign workers, the workers then apply for temporary or Work to Residence visas under the Talent (Accredited Employers) Work Policy, referencing the accredited employer and including the job offer in the application. The offer must be for a minimum of two years, working at least 30 hours per week, have a minimum salary of NZ\$45,000 and meet occupational registration requirements. The prospective employee must be 55 years or under, and for those who elect to come in under Work to Residence, they must be not older than 53 years, as the Skilled Migrant Category requires that applicants be less than 56 when they become permanent residents.

d) Relationship Managers

An innovation in the New Zealand immigration system is the development of a team of Relationship Managers within the Workplace Services Branch of NZIS. They are responsible for outreach within New Zealand to assist employers, associations, sector bodies and Industry Training Organizations in their overseas recruitment needs and strategy development. This service arose as a response to the extreme skills shortages experienced by employers over the past two years. Relationship Managers are responsible on a sectoral basis rather than regional around the country, and work with employers and other bodies in health, engineering, hospitality, biotechnology, construction ICT, creative and education. In addition to direct services to the employer and business community, the team has developed an “Immigration Guide for Employers” which addresses many of the questions employers have about hiring skilled migrants. It also clarifies the process of recruiting, the various categories and policies available to meet employer needs, and becoming accredited with NZIS.

A new initiative being considered and developed is to arrange third party accreditation for local Chambers of Commerce on behalf of their members. NZIS would accredit the



Chamber for a given geographic area, which would then recommend member employers into the scheme. Joint responsibility for compliance would rest with both the Chamber and the employer. In this way, smaller employers are enabled to recruit overseas workers with less administrative burden on themselves and NZIS.

3. Foreign Credential Recognition

New Zealand's qualification recognition requirements for skilled migrants are linked to the immigration process, but are not formalized in the immigration application for most occupations (other than some professional ones, primarily health). In general, NZIS requires applicants under the permanent Skilled Migrant Category to have their qualifications assessed for equivalence to New Zealand standards between the EOI and the Invitation to Apply stages of the immigration application process. This is most critical for those occupations on the LTSSL where full or provisional registration by the relevant body may be required to be eligible for bonus points. NZIS does not insist that an applicant have his or her credentials assessed prior to submitting an EOI, but it is highly recommended.

As a unitary state, New Zealand's qualifications recognition process is conducted at one national level. Most international qualifications are assessed for equivalence to New Zealand standards for the purposes of immigration, employment or the educational basis for professional registration by the Qualifications Recognition Service (QRS) of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). New Zealand's education system is placed on a Qualification Framework, with the various levels (from Level 1 - lower skilled trades certificates to Level 10 - doctorates) referring to the accredited qualifications from institutions listed on the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications. The New Zealand level to which international qualifications are assessed is translated into points for qualifications in the immigration application. For the Skilled Migrant Category, the general minimum level for eligibility is Level 4, which is a skilled trades certificate. This level makes the applicant eligible for 50 points for qualifications, while a master or doctorate degree makes the applicant eligible for 55 points.



For immigration purposes only, the QRS will issue a pre-assessment result online. This is an optional step for migrants who wish to have their qualifications assessed prior to lodging an EOI. No documentation is required, and the report only states the level of education in New Zealand terms, without any authentication process. For applicants who will need to have their qualifications assessed more thoroughly, for example as a basis for professional registration, a full Qualifications Assessment Report is recommended. QRS only assesses qualifications from accredited institutions in other countries. NZIS maintains a List of Recognized Qualifications from accredited tertiary institutions in a number of countries around the world. If the institution is listed, the applicant does not need to have qualifications assessed by NZQA. NZQA assessments are essential for non-regulated occupations, and NZQA is the official body assessing overseas trades and vocational training qualifications. Certain trades occupations such as electricians, are also subject to registration and licensing by the Electrical Workers Board (see Appendix C).

Regulated professions have registration bodies which are responsible for the registration of all practitioners. These bodies conduct more in-depth evaluations of the international qualifications than does NZQA. In some cases an NZQA assessment for the level of education and type of qualification is used as a supplement for the professional body evaluation of the general qualifications achieved, however the registration body then goes on to evaluate (and sometimes examine) occupation-specific qualifications, skills, competencies and work experience for registration.

Some professional bodies, particularly the Medical Council of New Zealand, have worked closely with NZIS to coordinate the requirements of the immigration system and those of the professional body. From a medical recruitment perspective, most of the international medical graduates who are assessed by the Medical Council come through recruitment firms, which convey the requirements for registration together with NZIS requirements, thus managing the expectations of the prospective migrant at the beginning of the process.



According to the Medical Council, approximately 41% of the doctors practicing in New Zealand are internationally trained – the highest proportion in the world. These pressures, together with a previous immigration policy resulting in a “doctors driving taxis syndrome” (and negative press), helped prompt the Medical Council’s arrangement with NZIS to take a “hand-in-hand” approach to skilled immigration. The international medical graduate essentially goes through both processes at the same time, thus largely avoiding the “catch-22” of being approved to immigrate by NZIS but not eligible to practice as a doctor in New Zealand, or vice versa (see Appendix C).

4. Employment

New Zealand’s skilled migration program is designed to be responsive to employer needs, but unlike Ireland, is not completely predicated upon them. The three principal categories of skilled immigration discussed above are intended to be supportive of overseas recruitment in the face of skill shortages, reflected by the ISSL and LTSSL and the structure of the points and bonus points system for the permanent Skilled Migrant Category. The Work to Residence and Employer Accreditation programs respond in a flexible way to immediate labour market need, while offering a path to permanent residence for those who wish to stay. Employers have opportunities to reflect their skill needs in several ways to government: through the consultation process conducted by NZIS in developing the skill shortage lists; individually through local Department of Labour offices around the country; and to the Relationship Managers.

The rapid route to filling immediate skill needs is the Employer Accreditation program, as it facilitates direct recruitment of skilled overseas workers. According to New Zealand business organizations and NZIS, employers are quite pleased with the Employer Accreditation program. The only sustained criticism of the program from employers relates to length of processing times.⁹

⁹Association representatives noted that employers would like the process to be quicker. The various service standards for processing immigration applications, qualifications recognition and professional body approval



From the skilled migrant perspective, having an offer of employment in New Zealand is the most effective way to ensure entry into the country, either through permanent immigration or via Work to Residence or Accredited Employers programs. The points-tested permanent migration scheme rewards not only those applicants who have job offers, but boosts their point count further through bonus points for offers, experience and qualifications in occupations with an absolute skill shortage. The emphasis on the offer of employment in structuring the points system helps orient it toward positive employment outcomes for the skilled migrant.

For those skilled migrants seeking to emigrate to New Zealand but who do not have job offers, New Zealand does not have a national job bank. However, sector specific vacancies are linked to the occupations on the skills shortage lists for potential migrants to research, and temporary visas are available for onshore job-seekers.

5. Observations and Key Elements

a) Observations

New Zealand operates an integrated but flexible immigration system that rewards employment or job offers in the points system but does not require them. It integrates labour market information, and shapes the permanent migration system such that applicants with education, work experience or a job offer in areas of absolute skill shortage are likely to be most successful in the process, because they are best matched to New Zealand's skill needs. It is flexible and responsive to employer needs through the Employer Accreditation program, and separates the requirements for work from the requirements for residence; thereby improving processing times. However, a path to permanence is available for all migration categories. New Zealand is working to build its society not just its labour market

(where possible) for each country are listed in Appendix E.



through immigration, and emphasizes the ability to settle and make a contribution to New Zealand social and economic development at the residency application stage.

In terms of measuring outcomes, no data are presently available by which to assess the current immigration program. Statistics New Zealand is conducting a Longitudinal Immigration Survey, and began data collection in 2004. It expects to begin releasing data later on in 2007.

b) Key Elements

A number of key elements and initiatives arise out of our investigation of New Zealand's migration system.

1. **Addressing the backlog.** New Zealand began to experience a large inventory of applicants in the early 2000s, and as part of its 2002 reforms, instituted the EOI and pool system. The structure of the system allows rapid selection for highly desirable applicants (over 140 points), and a reasonable chance of selection from the pool shortly thereafter for desirable applicants in priority occupations (100-140 points). NZIS staff estimate a drop-off rate after examination of EOIs of approximately 20 percent. The reduction in the backlog is also due to additional allocation of officers within NZIS.

2. **Employer needs reflected in ISSL and LTSSL.** The development of regional immediate and absolute long term skill shortage lists reflect employer needs and more general labour market analysis. These are in turn linked to the Skilled Migrant Category points system and options are calibrated to the severity of the need in the economy. Occupations on the ISSL result in temporary work permits, while occupations in areas of long term structural shortage result in higher point counts and immediate options for permanent residence. The extensive employer consultation by NZIS in developing these lists, including via survey, one-on-one interviews, and broader stakeholder consultation



including labour unions, provides a direct means for employer input into the list development.

3. **Qualifications assessment connected to migration process.** The qualifications assessment process for migration to New Zealand is embedded in the process after the EOI stage (for permanent skilled migration). The expectation of NZIS is that applicants have their qualifications assessed by NZQA or the relevant professional body once they have lodged their EOI and are waiting to learn if they have been invited to apply. Qualifications assessment is integrated into immigration in two ways: first, in order to qualify for the bonus points attached to LTSSL occupations, migrants must show they meet the specific eligibility for that occupation (conditions are published on the List); and second, if the applicant is in a professional occupation, evidence of provisional registration or equivalence of qualifications is generally required from the professional body (all of which are listed on the NZIS website) before the applicant is invited to apply for residence. By incorporating qualifications assessment into the process, the New Zealand model attempts to minimize the possibility of a skill and qualification mismatch.

4. **Professional registration and immigration process.** Some professional registration bodies, in particular the Medical Council of New Zealand, have been proactive in coordinating registration requirements of international medical graduates with the immigration requirements of NZIS. The closer links between the registration body and immigration officials help clarify for the prospective migrant procedures for navigating both processes, and improves certainty that the applicant will not be declined by immigration due to absence of approval by the Medical Council, or vice versa.

5. **Immigration outreach.** The Relationship Managers represent NZIS's domestic outreach to employers, associations and communities. The advice and information they provide to employers on the appropriate migration program to meet their particular skill needs, and the advice they provide to communities on settlement and integration helps



clarify NZIS procedures and provides a personal link for employers with immigration officials. This function helps raise employer awareness of options, facilitates the application process, and helps New Zealand employers meet their skill needs more rapidly and effectively.

6. **Chamber of Commerce accreditation.** While not yet an accepted practice in New Zealand, the Relationship Manager team is interested in developing third party Employer Accreditation of Chambers of Commerce so that member employers are not required to undergo individual accreditation. In this way, smaller employers would be able to access overseas skilled workers without the individual administrative burden in becoming accredited while reducing the volume of applications to NZIS.



E. Australia

Among the countries investigated in this study around skilled migration, the structure in Australia (a federal system of one Commonwealth government plus six state and two territory governments) is most like that of Canada (a federal government plus provincial and territorial governments). As a consequence, for the regulated skilled occupations, prospective migrants often face more than one level of qualifications assessment and registration upon being accepted to migrate to Australia.

Australia underwent a major review and policy change in its immigration system in 1999-2000, incorporating cross-department consultation and planning among the Department of Immigration & Multicultural Affairs,¹⁰ Department of Workplace Relations (DEWR) and Department of Education, Science and Training, introducing a points-tested program, developing listings of labour market shortages, and requiring up-front qualifications assessment. Among the most notable changes in approach were that 1) immigration officers remove themselves from the verification of qualifications, and 2) skilled migration be driven by labour market needs as determined by DEWR. The country is presently undergoing another review, and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) expects that some programs and procedures will be further streamlined.

Australia has a complex immigration system, with a range of skilled visa classes, including regional and state-sponsored (for Australia, the term “visa” refers to the type of permit under which one enters the country). The skilled independent applicants under the General Skilled Migration (GSM) category accounts for roughly 79,000 of the annual target of 97,500 for all skilled migration to Australia. For the purpose of this study, the four principal Australian visa classes are outlined below in Table 3.

¹⁰ Renamed Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) in February 2007.

Table 3: Australia Skilled Migration System Summary

	<i>Points Based</i>	<i>On Skill Shortage List</i>	<i>Labour Market Test</i>	<i>Path to Permanent Residence</i>
General Skilled Migration – Skilled Independent (permanent)	Yes	Must be on SOL, may be on MODL	Not if on SOL or MODL	Yes, immediate upon approval
Employer Nomination (permanent)	No	Must be on ENSOL	Not if on SOL/ENSOL	Yes, immediate upon approval
Temporary Business (Long Stay) – “457”	No	Occupation/min. salary. List is gazetted	Not if on gazetted list	Not directly, but possible
Labour Agreement (temp or permanent)	No	Not required	Required	If temporary, not directly

1. Labour Market Needs

In Australia, DEWR is responsible for all labour market information, including gathering regional information on skills shortages, and on the labour market impact of immigration. The two key lists prepared by DEWR’s Migration Policy and Analysis Section are the Skilled Occupations List (SOL) and the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL). Each of these lists, plus two others (discussed below), is related to specific visa classes which guide skilled migration applicant eligibility. In Australia, the skilled migration program is not predicated specifically on a job offer (although that is rewarded in bonus points in the points system), but it is heavily driven by Australia’s labour market needs.

Australian employers’ labour market needs are expressed through the labour market analysis conducted by DEWR through monthly Vacancy Reports (including a Skilled Vacancy Index) and other measures. The Skills Shortages and Training Strategies Branch conducts analysis based on job vacancies across occupations, and then contacts employers for more qualitative information and verification. The data collected is subsequently used to develop the various skill shortage lists.

The SOL is not an indicator of skill shortage; rather it is a list of occupations considered to be skilled in Australia. This list feeds into the General Skilled Migration (GSM) visa



program in that applicants to this program must nominate an occupation from the SOL to be eligible to apply to migrate to Australia. This list provides a transparent framework around the GSM process, such that prospective migrants are clear that if their occupations are not on the SOL, they cannot apply to immigrate to Australia under the GSM category.

The MODL does represent national skills shortages in Australia, and feeds into the GSM approval process in that applicants with occupations on the MODL are eligible for bonus points (20 points if applicant has a job offer for a MODL occupation, 15 points if applicant nominates a MODL occupation but does not have a job offer). Both lists are reviewed and updated by DEWR every six months, and form the backbone of the labour market information that is relevant for Australia's permanent skilled migration program.

Two additional lists are utilized to assist DIAC in determining eligibility for the Employer Nomination Scheme and the Temporary Business (Long Stay) Visa Class – the so-called “457”. The Employer Nomination Scheme Occupations List (ENSOL) is developed by DEWR in conjunction with DIAC, and applies to four occupational groupings in the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO): Managers and Administrators, Professionals, Associate Professionals and Tradespersons and Related Workers. Minimum salary levels are stated. A broad listing of eligible occupations for the Temporary 457 visa is gazetted by DIAC from time to time, including minimum salary levels.

The labour market analysis is integrated into the immigration process principally via the lists described above. The SOL and ENSOL lists are published together, and the form includes all relevant information that the prospective permanent migrant (whether under the GSM or Employer Nomination Scheme visa classes) needs to determine his or her eligibility to apply to migrate to Australia with a given nominated occupation: the eligible point count for the occupation, which list it appears on, the name of the assessing authority for qualifications recognition, the contact information for that authority, and a brief summary of the assessment process.



2. Immigration

Australia has a range of permanent and temporary visa classes for skilled migrants. The Australian system relies heavily on the lists that are developed out of skills shortage analyses to attract skilled migrants to those occupations that are in demand. One of the defining features of Australia's immigration model is the formalized requirement to have international qualifications assessed prior to submitting an application for immigration. This policy resulted from the reforms of 1999-2000, arising out of two conclusions arrived at by immigration officials: first, they felt that qualifications assessment should be conducted by experts, not DIAC; and second they felt that applicants should know whether they could work in Australia before they submitted their application and paid the fee. Under the previous system, the first step in the process was submitting the immigration application, followed by qualifications assessment. If these were not accepted as equivalent to Australian qualifications, applicants would suffer in two ways: they could not work in their field and they would lose their migration application fee (non-refundable).

Thus, the present permanent migration system has formalized linkages between labour market demand, qualifications assessment and immigration approval. The potential rigidity of this system is balanced by the range of sponsored and temporary visas available to meet skilled labour market needs in a more flexible manner.

a) General Skilled Migration Visa

The GSM program for skilled independent (i.e. not sponsored by an employer or state) migrants is the points-tested permanent immigration program to Australia. Points for this visa are allocated based on the following criteria:

- skilled occupation
- age (under 45 years old)
- English language ability
- specific work experience
- occupation in demand (and job offer)



Other specific criteria apply to a range of additional visa sub-classes, including Australian qualifications and/or work experience, spouse skills, and family in Australia.

Applicants can complete an online self-assessment form prior to lodging an application. Applications for the GSM program are received in hard copy only (except for international students onshore in Australia at the time of application) and are processed centrally in Adelaide. All supporting documentation, including evidence of qualifications assessment for the nominated occupation, must accompany the application. If the applicant meets the pass mark, presently set at 120, he or she will be assessed further. Applicants whose points total is between 70 and 120 will be placed in a “pool” for two years, in the event the pass mark is lowered during that time.

Among the most important criteria for an applicant to meet the 120 pass mark are the nominated skilled occupation, and whether that occupation is in demand (i.e. on the MODL). As described in the Labour Market Needs section above, the nominated occupation must be on the SOL, which ascribes a range of points (between 40 and 60) depending on the level of training and its relevance to the nominated occupation. MODL occupations are eligible for an additional 15 or 20 points. MODL occupation applicants are also eligible for priority processing.

Applicants must also meet other criteria, including health and character. Health assessments are determined on a risk-management basis as determined by DIAC, and depend on source country and intended occupation in Australia. Character requirements are evidenced by police certificates from previous country(ies) of residence. English language proficiency is confirmed by an IELTS test score, and is generally required for a national of any country whose first language is not English. A higher IELTS standard is often required for state occupational registration body approval. A path to citizenship is available after a period of residence.



b) Employer Nomination Scheme Visa

The Employer Nomination Scheme is the program for Australian employers who wish to sponsor foreign nationals for a permanent visa to work in Australia. Eligible employees include offshore foreign workers and those onshore in Australia working on a temporary visa (such as the 457 visa, discussed below). The occupation for which the employer wishes to sponsor a foreign worker must be on the ENSOL. This visa type is not points-tested, however the employer must ensure that the occupation is on this list when the position is nominated to DIAC. After approval by DIAC, the employer finds a suitable employee, who then applies for the visa.

This visa class places a range of obligations on both the employer and prospective employee. The employer must be lawfully operating an enterprise in Australia, have a genuine need for skilled employees, and have a training strategy for existing Australian employees. With respect to the nominated position, it must be full time permanent, meet minimum salary requirements as indicated on the ENSOL (presently A\$41,850 gross for a range of gazetted occupations, and A\$57,300 for eight designated IT professional occupations). The offshore employee must have had his or her qualifications assessed as suitable by the relevant Australian authority, have met any registration or licensing requirements, and have worked in the occupation for a minimum of three years. Other requirements are substantially the same as the GSM category, including age, English language ability, health and character.

This visa can be a benefit to both the employer and employee as it offers a path to permanence for the foreign worker who is already in Australia on a temporary work visa. The requirement in this scenario is that the employee must have worked full time in Australia in the nominated occupation for the previous two years, and have been working for the nominating employer for at least the past year.



c) Temporary Business (Long Stay) Visa – the “457”

The popular and flexible 457 temporary visa is designed for Australian employers to sponsor foreign workers to fill nominated occupations. The visa is valid for a period from three months to four years. The occupation must be nominated from a list gazetted from time to time by DIAC, be full time, and meet minimum skill and salary levels. This list is quite broad, and includes the occupational categories of management and administrative, professional, associate professional, trades and related workers.

The first step for an employer under this visa class is to become approved by DIAC as a business sponsor. The business sponsor may then nominate one or more occupations and positions under the visa. Once approved as a sponsor and for the nominated occupations, the employer recruits the overseas workers, who then apply for the visa. To balance the broad nature of the eligibility list of occupations, the employer obligations are sufficiently comprehensive to encourage local recruitment prior to recruiting overseas. The employer must cover the cost of return airfare for the worker and any dependent, undertake to pay any hospital or health care expenses (beyond those covered by insurance), and pay the gazetted minimum gross salary, which may be higher than the standard Australian salary.¹¹ The employer must also be prepared to undergo ongoing monitoring by DIAC as to ongoing compliance with Australian labour laws and pay. Benefits to the worker include permission to bring dependents and for them to work or study, and unlimited departure and re-entry to Australia.

While the flexibility of this visa class makes it attractive to employers and foreign skilled workers alike, it is open to pressure by employers to recruit lower skilled occupations under the 457 heading, as there is no program for lower-skilled migration to Australia other than the working holidaymaker scheme. The program has gained a recent high profile due to

¹¹ The policy of a higher minimum salary has led to contradictory accusations by labour market stakeholders: both that it puts upward pressure on wages and downward pressure. The rationale for a higher salary than the going Australian rate is designed to signal to the employer that the labour market need must be real, and that the position being nominated is indeed a skilled occupation.



some cases of employer abuse of working conditions or pay. The Office of Workplace Services under DEWR operates an inspection and compliance regime that has broad powers to investigate and sanction non-compliant employers.

As Australia's labour market tightens, this visa category has grown significantly, from roughly 22,000 workers in 2003/04 to approximately 50,000 in 2006/07. According to DIAC's Business Employment Section, which administers the 457 visa class, about 20 percent of 457 visa holders take advantage of the path to permanence and apply for some type of permanent visa. 457 holders may renew their visas and they may change employer after a period of time (although the new employer is required to register as a sponsor and to nominate the occupation, and the worker must re-apply for the visa with the new employer). Unlike the GSM category, there is no cap on the number of visas issued; it is strictly a demand-driven program.

d) Labour Agreements

The Labour Agreement program allows employers to recruit foreign skilled workers for either temporary or permanent visas. Agreements may be negotiated on an industry or sector basis for the supply of needed skills, where occupations are not listed for either the 457 Temporary Business visa or the Employer Nomination Scheme visa, yet genuine skill shortages exist, or where a larger number of overseas skilled workers is required by an employer (DIAC's guideline is 50 or more). The proponent negotiates the Labour Agreement with DIAC, which is valid for two to three years. The employer then is able to recruit workers on temporary terms like those described for the 457 visa or on permanent terms like those under the Employer Nomination Scheme.

e) Regional and Industry Outreach Officers

In response to Australia's growing skills shortage, DIAC developed a country-wide network of Regional Outreach Offices. Regional Outreach Officers (ROOs) liaise with local chambers of commerce, other employer organizations, regional development boards and individual employers to assist with filling skill needs through employer sponsored migration.



These officers are not “case officers” for the employer; rather they provide information, raise awareness and clarify overseas recruitment options for Australian businesses. Their support materials include brochures and information packages on Employing Overseas Skills.

Industry Outreach Officers (IOOs) perform a similar function, but focus on the needs of sector based organizations, and a third, smaller category of Metropolitan Outreach Officers liaise with overseas students at Australian universities to make them aware of their migration options for remaining in Australia to work. There are approximately 12 Regional Outreach Offices around the country, and roughly ten Industry Outreach Offices. The Industry Outreach Officer may be physically situated within a sector association body office to provide ongoing, timely advice and information.

These officers also consult with employers on their immediate and predicted skill needs, and this serves as input into the targets for DIAC’s annual skilled migration program.

3. Foreign Credential Recognition

In Australia, the qualifications assessment function is critical to the immigration program. As part of the immigration policy changes in 1999, the Pre-Application Skills Assessment (PASA) process was put into place. This was designed to ensure that applicants with foreign gained qualifications would have these qualifications recognized in Australia and therefore be able to work in their field of training upon arrival. This assessment does not encompass the licensing or registration function for regulated occupations. It is strictly an assessment for immigration purposes. The assessment report is sent to the overseas worker, who then submits it with his or her application to DIAC. Once the applicant has been approved and arrives in Australia, additional registration, membership or licensing may be required in order to work.



a) **Pre-Application Skills Assessment**

The pre-arrival assessment process is conducted by a number of bodies, depending on the occupation. For tertiary education, the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR), under the authority of the Department of Education, Science and Training maintains a database of Country Education Profiles. These profiles document the tertiary education institutions by grouping (university, college, technical institute etc.) of over 100 countries. Access to these profiles is available online by subscription, and may be used by professional bodies to support their assessments, individual employers, Australian education institutions and any other interested stakeholders. The profiles are revised on an ongoing basis; for example this year 15 countries are being comprehensively reviewed and updated, including the addition of three or four new countries. NOOSR also delegates PASA functions for vocational education and training to an organization called VETASSESS (Vocational Education and Training Assessment Services) which assesses overseas vocational qualifications with respect to equivalency to Australian qualifications.

A quality-assured, unified Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) was established to recognize secondary and tertiary qualifications across the country. The AQF certifies knowledge and skills, and lists 17 qualifications, along with a Registry of institutions, accreditation authorities and courses. It also illustrates cross-sectoral linkages to emphasize learning and employment pathways. For migration purposes to assess equivalency to Australian standards, the levels on the AQF are the standards against which all overseas qualifications are assessed.

For regulated fields, approximately 35 bodies have been designated by DIAC (with advice and information from NOOSR) as the approved authorities for assessment of overseas credentials in a given occupation. These bodies review overseas qualifications for the purposes of migration, and provide assessments as to the suitability of the qualification for practice in Australia. This assessment is only valid for the purposes of migration. The bodies who conduct the PASA in regulated occupations are national in scope. If, as for



most professions in Australia, the registration body is at the state level, the overseas applicant will apply to the national designated body to have his or her qualifications recognized prior to immigration, and then apply to the state board for registration or licensing upon arrival.

For skilled trades, Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) is responsible for conducting PASA in 171 trades. As with regulated professional fields, this assessment does not indicate accreditation or ascribe any rights to work in Australia, but assesses the skills and qualifications, and establishes equivalency to Australian standards. TRA is also the internal accreditation body for 49 traditional skilled trades (as designated by previous legislation). If the overseas applicant works in one of these 49 trades, upon arrival he or she can seek a one-time accreditation by TRA and be immediately accredited to work in Australia. However, some skilled trades, including electricians, are required to register with state bodies prior to working in Australia.

The many bodies associated with overseas skills and qualifications assessment in Australia can lead to confusion on the part of the prospective migrant. To resolve this, DIAC launched a web-based resource called Australian Skills Recognition Information (ASRI). This resource, positioned within the “Professionals and other Skilled Migrants” section of DIAC’s website, is a one-stop information site explaining both sides of Australian qualifications recognition: the pre-arrival assessment for immigration, and the post-arrival registration and licensing requirements for certain occupations. In addition, a series of Overseas Qualification Units have been established in most Australian states to assist migrants with overseas qualifications recognition, state occupational registration, English language and/or bridging programs, and an advocacy role with respect to assessment authorities.

b) Post-Arrival Registration and Licensing

Within Australia’s federal system, most regulated occupations are governed at the state level. Therefore, with few exceptions, while a national body conducts a pre-arrival assessment, the



body that registers or licenses the newly arrived migrant to work in Australia is generally at the state level. Depending on the occupation, state bodies have somewhat varying, or widely varying, standards and procedures for registration. Of the four occupations profiled in Appendix C, only one has a national standard with no additional mandatory registration, and that is the IT professional. Of the other three, officials at either the state¹² or national level concurred that for their respective fields (medicine, nursing and electrical trade) the state variations in registration requirements were not significant.

The principle of mutual recognition (enshrined in legislation) was raised by assessment and registration bodies to illustrate the comparability of state registration requirements: once a person is registered for a skilled occupation in one state, the registration is recognized all over the country, facilitating labour mobility. As often as mutual recognition was highlighted to illustrate the similarity of requirements across states, it was raised to illustrate the differences. The perceived differences can lead to strategic behaviour by applicants seeking registration in the state with the perceived least stringent requirements and then moving to a preferred location.

Therefore, the ongoing perception of difference among state registration requirements has led the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), a council of all state and territorial governments plus the prime minister and the president of the local governments association, to launch a process of harmonization (initially within the health professions) where one national standard will apply with one national registration. At the present time, most health registration bodies and national councils appear to be supportive of the process. Consultation is ongoing, and the new registration procedures are scheduled to be implemented in July 2008.

In the area of onshore registration, ASRI represents a one-stop online resource for state registrations, offering an A-Z occupational listing, and information and links to various

¹² All state officials consulted were representatives of New South Wales registration bodies.



bodies. Once an occupation is selected, a summary page provides all of the following information:

- Job title and ASCO (Australian Standard Classification of Occupations) code
- Job description
- Skill level – including education and work experience required for migration
- Skilled occupation information – including eligibility for GSM migration, point count, presence on SOL, ENSOL and MODL
- Skills assessment authority (for purposes of migration) – including contact information, procedure, factors considered in assessment
- Licensing or registration requirements – including each state/territorial board contact information
- Additional training options
- Industry association memberships – for employment prospects, networking, support

Australia's system of qualifications assessment, although complex, can be beneficial to both the employer and overseas skilled worker regardless of the visa class of entry. An assessment introduces certainty to the recruitment of the overseas worker. For the employer, a positive qualifications assessment at the beginning of the immigration process signals that the employee's skills and qualifications are suitable and meet the employer's expectations. For the worker, it signals that he or she will be accepted to work in Australia in the type of skilled employment nominated in the immigration application.

4. Employment

Under certain visa categories, the offer of employment is an essential first step for entry into Australia, on either a permanent or temporary basis. For the principal points-tested GSM program, an offer of a job in Australia is not necessary, but is rewarded with bonus points in the point count. For the prospective migrant, the GSM category is predicated primarily on Australia's labour market needs assessment, rather than on a specific job offer.

From the employer point of view, the Employer Nomination Scheme, the Business 457 temporary visa and the Labour Agreements offer a range of flexible pathways to recruit



overseas skilled workers, provided the nominated occupation is listed as skilled and in demand, and the prospective employee brings the appropriate qualifications and skills to the position. Employers are reasonably positive about the various permanent and temporary visa options that allow them to bring in skilled workers, and are supportive of the move toward national standards for qualifications recognition.

Australian employers can search for needed skills by accessing a Skill Matching Database operated by DIAC. This database is eligible for any skilled migrant who has lodged an application to migrate to Australia. For GSM Skilled Independent applicants, this means they can post their occupation, skills and work experience for Australian employers and state/territory governments to view. It is particularly helpful for applicants whose point count places them in the pool rather than being immediately accepted for processing. The Skill Matching Database is not a job bank, but rather a resource that matches migrants' skills with skill shortages and regional skill requirements. The employer can contact the migrant via DIAC, and if the employer makes a job offer, the migrant's visa application can be converted to an Employer Nomination Scheme application. Alternatively, a state or territorial government can nominate the applicant, in which case the migrant applies under a state or territory sponsored visa.

In addition, Australian employers engage in direct overseas recruitment on a singular basis, and also as part of larger recruitment efforts. Australia is active internationally participating in job fairs, particularly in Britain. Employers can join state bodies and industry associations at the Australian overseas post to meet pre-screened candidates and make on-site job offers.

5. *Observations and Key Elements*

a) *Observations*

As emphasized throughout this section, one of the two defining features of Australia's migration system is the requirement for up-front qualifications assessments prior to applying for immigration. The PASA process transparently and clearly evaluates migrants'



qualifications, skills and experience in terms of equivalency to Australian standards. The second defining feature of the system is the occupational lists that are applicable to each visa category. The reliance on current, detailed and accurate LMI for the permanent points tested program signals to the skilled migrant that even if they arrive in Australia without arranged employment, they have a reasonable chance of finding work in their occupation. The combination of the PASA requirement and the reliance on the various lists represent the orientation of the immigration system to match the skills needed in Australia with those brought by the migrant.

The orientation of the GSM program toward selecting highly skilled migrants for occupations in demand appears to be working in practice, according to research conducted by leading academics utilising recent and longitudinal survey data. Their findings indicate that employment status for recently-arrived skilled independent migrants (at six months) was higher in 2005 (83% in the labour force) than in 2000 (76% in the labour force), when the present program was launched.¹³

The two-step assessment process required due to state level responsibility for licensing and registration can still mean that a skilled migrant may not be registered to work in his or her occupation upon arrival in Australia, despite having a satisfactory qualifications assessment. Further, the perceived differing standards between states can lead to strategic behaviour with respect to which state body a skilled migrant seeks registration. The emerging COAG process around developing a single national registration procedure in the health professions is beneficial to resolving certainly the second concern, and in time perhaps the first concern as well. A positive result from the health professions' harmonization may also drive an expansion of these measures to other regulated fields, which would add greater certainty to both employer and skilled migrant.

¹³ Bob Birrell, Leslyanne Hawthorne and Sue Richardson, (2006). *Evaluation of the General Skilled Migration Categories Report*. Australia Department of Immigration and Citizenship.



b) Key Elements

The investigation of Australia's comprehensive system offers a number of key innovative ideas and initiatives.

1. **National authorities and pre-assessment of international qualifications.** The series of 35 national assessment authorities designated to pre-assess international qualifications across the regulated occupations unifies the standards expected of an occupation in Australia (given its federal system), and clarifies to the migrant the status of qualifications upon arrival.

2. **NOOSR and CEP Database.** The National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition and its development of the Country Education Profiles are substantially beneficial to many stakeholders who interact with skilled migrants, from employers to domestic education institutions. The central role of NOOSR in developing and updating the Profiles and advising DIAC on the gazettal of assessment authorities lends consistency to all the elements required for an effective qualifications assessment process.

3. **LMI integration into immigration process.** Australia operates a tightly integrated migration system that relies heavily on the determination of skill needs. The extensive LMI that DEWR engages in supports the various skilled migration programs by rewarding those applicants whose training and experience is specific to the listed occupations. For the permanent GSM category, up to half the necessary point count can be gained simply by nominating a 60 point occupation on the SOL. The MODL serves to further orient the GSM program to skills in demand through the bonus point structure, with the result that permanent skilled migration to Australia is heavily weighted to favour skilled work in occupations needed in the country. The additional lists relating to the Employer Nomination Scheme and the 457 visa represent the attempt to apply broader labour market analysis to each program, rather than relying solely on employer demand.



4. **Temporary Business (Long Stay) Visa class – “457”.** The 457 visa is popular among Australian employers, as it is a flexible, rapid program for recruiting temporary skilled workers without having to pass a labour market test. The conditions placed upon the employer, including paying a minimum salary, appear to balance flexibility with determining genuine need for workers. The length of the term (up to four years), the ability to bring dependents, the right of travel and the path to permanence represented by the 457 visa are all appealing to prospective migrants. The downward pressure exerted by Australian employers on the eligible occupations and some of the publicized abuses appear to be unique to the Australian context as it has no visa category for employers to recruit for lower skilled occupations.

5. **Labour Agreements.** These allow for industry wide or large employer multi-occupational skill needs to be negotiated with DIAC under one umbrella approval. Labour Agreements remove the requirement for individual approvals, and employers are able to recruit for both temporary and permanent skilled positions. These introduce certainty for employers as they are valid over a two to three year period. They also encourage forward planning by employers for their skilled human resource needs.

6. **Immigration outreach.** The combination of a skill shortage and increased targets for the permanent skilled migration category resulted in DIAC’s development of a network of Regional Outreach Officers, Industry Outreach Officers and Metropolitan Outreach Officers. They represent DIAC domestically to employers, regional development bodies and industry associations to market, clarify and navigate Australia’s somewhat complex immigration system. They both represent the face of the department to employers for the programs offered, and through their consultation function they reflect employer needs (particularly magnitude of skill needs) back to the department. The information function of the Outreach Officers means improved targeting to fit the right visa category for the needs of the employer (and onshore skilled migrant), meaning skill shortages can be addressed more effectively.

F. Canada

Canada continues to be a desirable place for international migrants, as evidenced by regularly achieving or surpassing Economic Class migration targets set by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). The Skilled Worker program admitted 130,242 new permanent residents in 2005, representing 50 percent of the overall immigration program, and exceeding the upper target of 124,500 by approximately five percent. Targets for the 2007 Skilled Worker program range from 90,000 to 100,500.¹⁴ It is also evidenced by lengthy “inventories” of applicants at posts around the world. According to CIC in 2006 Canada had an acknowledged backlog of 800,000 applications for all visa classes around the world.¹⁵ Canada’s current policy on skilled migration is to emphasize a human capital approach where the most successful migrants are skilled, educated and adaptable; qualities that are beneficial to the prospective migrant to settle in the country, and be flexible and mobile in the workforce. The current skilled migration system supports this approach. The principal elements of Canada’s immigration system for skilled workers are outlined in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Canada Skilled Migration System Summary

	<i>Points Test</i>	<i>Labour Market Test</i>	<i>Path to Permanent Residence</i>
Permanent Skilled Worker Program	Yes	Not required	Yes, immediate upon approval
Temporary Foreign Worker Program	No	Yes – min 7 days on Job Bank if on BC/AB occupations under pressure lists Two weeks if not on lists	Not directly, expedited via PNP or via onshore Skilled Worker application
BC Provincial Nominee Program	No	No – priority occupation list developed by PNP officials	Yes, immediate upon approval

¹⁴ See Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2006*.

¹⁵ Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Address to Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, May 10, 2006.



1. Labour Market Needs

Employers' skilled labour market needs are beginning, in western Canada at least, to be reflected in the development of lists of occupational shortages. These lists are linked to the immigration process in two of the three programs outlined above: labour market needs are not presently incorporated into the permanent Skilled Worker program.

Canada's labour market information is conducted by Service Canada, a branch of the department of Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC). It collects and analyses national and regional labour market data. In late 2006, acute skill shortages in western Canada, particularly British Columbia and Alberta, prompted the joint announcement by CIC and HRSDC of regional lists of occupations under pressure (one list for each province). These lists were developed by Service Canada, using 4-digit National Occupation Classification (NOC) codes, based on indicators of above average demand for the occupation, above average wage increase, percent increase in Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program applications, and below average Employment Insurance claims. These occupations were then weighted and ranked as to skill shortage. Combined with qualitative data collected from employers and other stakeholders, British Columbia's list of 129 occupations under pressure was developed, and feeds into the revised procedures for the TFW Program in the province (discussed below). The lists are expected to be updated annually, utilising a broader range of data sources, including the national job bank.

Employers seeking workers in the listed occupations face less stringent labour market tests than for other occupations. For these occupations, employers are now required to advertise for seven days on the national web-based job bank, and for the same period in a local and industry-relevant publication. Employers are still required to request a Labour Market Opinion (LMO) from HRSDC, which assesses the proposed work for appropriate wage rates and working conditions.



General LMI is gathered at a regional and national level by Service Canada for the TFW Program, as HRSDC is required to issue an LMO each time an employer makes an application for a temporary foreign worker. A positive or neutral LMO must be issued for the TFW application to proceed with the department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). A positive or neutral LMO confirms that the Canadian labour market for that occupation will not be adversely affected by the entry of a temporary foreign worker.

Service Canada manages an extensive LMI website that provides a range of detailed occupational information on a provincial and regional basis, which may be used as a guide for employers, Canadian job seekers, and prospective foreign workers. The series of occupational profiles that can be accessed are organized by NOC code and include job description, nature of work, main duties, related occupations, skill and job requirements, employment prospects, wages and salaries, association and union information, training options, and other related regional, provincial and national information. Once an occupation is selected by NOC code, the information listed above may be compared between regions. For example, an industrial electrician in Vancouver, British Columbia can be compared against the same occupation in Calgary, Alberta, with respect to duties, skill requirements and wages.

With respect to LMI for the British Columbia Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), PNP officials develop a list of priority occupations that is both broader and more flexible than that developed by Service Canada. According to the BC PNP, its list is more regionally grounded, deals with local interests in terms of labour market needs, and takes a longer term view of occupations and sectors in demand than the approach of Service Canada: as the PNP is concerned with permanent immigration, it tries to assess the longer term job market situation for nominees. However, it relies on similar data to Service Canada, including Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS), Statistics Canada and other national data from leading sector groups. The BC list of occupations under pressure is useful to the PNP as additional background for its work on skills priority lists based on NOC occupation



codes with skill level A (requiring university training), B (requiring college and/or apprenticeship training, or O (managerial occupations). Some liaison with Service Canada is anticipated to review and update the lists periodically.

2. *Immigration*

Canada's present governing legislation for CIC and the operation of the skilled immigration program is the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and Regulations* (2001) (IRPA). In terms of its human capital approach, it continues the revisions of the early 1990s that shifted emphasis in the intake to skilled migration from family class, and continues to use the points system to evaluate independent principal applicants. For the Skilled Worker class, IRPA emphasizes transferable skills, as opposed to specific occupational criteria. Canada operates a number of migration programs for skilled migrant workers and for employers seeking to recruit overseas. The key permanent and temporary programs are outlined below.

a) Permanent Skilled Worker Program

Canada's principal program for permanent skilled migration is the Economic Class, Skilled Worker Program. It is the only points-tested migration program. Prospective applicants can undergo a web-based self assessment test, to determine if they meet the pass mark of 67 points. A simplified application form was recently introduced, where only the completed form and fee must be submitted. Once the relevant visa office is ready to assess the application, the supporting documentation will be requested.

The points system is based on the following six criteria:

- education
- English and French language ability
- work experience
- age
- arranged employment (job offer)
- adaptability



To be eligible for the maximum points in the arranged employment category the occupation must be on the NOC at skill level A, B or O and have had a minimum of one year's full time (or equivalent) work experience in that occupation within the past ten years. Indicators or "Adaptability" are partner education level, applicant or partner previous study in Canada, and family in Canada.

CIC conducts additional health and character checks as part of the Skilled Worker Program application. The health checks are conducted by Canada-approved physicians overseas or overseen by Canadian physicians, and character checks require police certificates from past jurisdictions of residence and are overseen by the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA). Approval of a Skilled Worker Program application conveys immediate permanent residence, with a path to citizenship.

This program represents a path for recruitment by Canadian employers in that points are awarded for a job offer, but immediate employer needs are fulfilled more rapidly by utilising the TFW Program for temporary workers, and the PNP for permanent offers of employment.

b) Temporary Foreign Worker Program

The first step for a Canadian employer under the TFW Program is to approach HRSDC/Service Canada for a positive or neutral LMO to employ an overseas skilled worker.¹⁶ The employer must advertise the position as described in the Labour Market Needs section above, and state the job description and proposed wage rate. The employer may concurrently be recruiting for the worker. Once a positive (or neutral) LMO has been issued by HRSDC, the employer notifies the skilled worker that he or she may apply to CIC for a Work Permit. Depending on the country of origin, the worker may also be required to apply for a temporary resident visa.

¹⁶ Exemptions from this requirement exist for certain temporary foreign workers including via NAFTA, entrepreneur, company transfer, international students engaged in co-op work terms, and spouses of certain skilled foreign workers.



The Work Permit has conditions and limitations attached (such as length of work – usually a maximum of three years – and location of the work), and is renewable. The TFW Program also offers pre-approval for employers requiring multiple workers that entails prolonged or complex recruitment activities. The temporary foreign worker may be asked to undergo a health check if the Work Permit is for longer than six months, depending on occupation and source country. The employer must provide in the application the type of education and/or credentials required for the position. CIC conducts the credential evaluation prior to issuing the Work Permit.

As outlined above, employers in British Columbia and Alberta who are experiencing skills shortages in occupations listed as “occupations under pressure” are eligible for a less stringent labour market test in obtaining a positive LMO from HRSDC. In addition, some occupation-wide pilot projects and agreements are made from time to time on the basis of sector wide LMI indicating national skill shortage: for example, HRSDC, CIC and the Software Human Resource Council of Canada (now called the Information and Communications Technology Council) agreed to a pilot project for software workers to fast-track TFW Permits. The pilot project removes the LMO requirement at the job-specific level, and applications can proceed on the basis of a nation-wide confirmation letter.

c) BC Provincial Nominee Program

British Columbia, like several other provinces, operates a PNP for employers to expedite recruitment of skilled foreign workers for permanent positions. The employer must first register with the PNP, which will vet the application, both as to the employer’s history, stability and ability to pay, and the validity of the position as a skilled occupation. The employer does not need to have a specific candidate recruited at this stage. The position stated does not have to be on the priority listing of occupations, however it must be a skilled occupation as defined by the NOC. There is no formalized requirement for credential



assessment at any stage in the process, with the exception of several health occupations.¹⁷ The PNP views this as the responsibility of an employer to recruit the right candidate. From the perspective of the employer, pre-approval is helpful if they are engaging in overseas recruitment fairs, as they have the certainty that they will be able to recruit, as long as the foreign worker meets the skills criteria for the position. Once a foreign worker has been selected, the province “nominates” the candidate to CIC by way of issuing a certificate. CIC will then conduct the other health and security checks required for permanent residence approval.

In the PNP’s experience to date, the majority of nominees are onshore applicants, having already arrived in Canada via the TFW Program. This pathway is the most rapid route to permanent residence in Canada, and is beneficial to both the employer and employee. For the employer, the working relationship has already been established under temporary terms, and for the employee, he or she has the job security – and credential recognition if required – to begin life in Canada as a permanent resident, under a more rapid program than application under the Skilled Worker Program.

According to officials, the verification process engaged in by the PNP is more lengthy and in-depth in assessing the eligibility of the employer than the prospective employee. To streamline the process, the PNP is considering establishing an accredited employer program, whereby employers are only assessed once for ongoing access to the program.

3. Foreign Credential Recognition

Foreign credential recognition (FCR) is not formally a part of the immigration process in Canada in any of the three programs discussed above (with some exceptions in the health professions). The regulated professional fields are each assessed by provincial regulatory bodies. There is no requirement for applicants to have their credentials assessed prior to

¹⁷ These requirements are handled by Health Match, a liaison service for health employment in BC. See Appendix C.



submitting an application under the Skilled Worker Program, although upon receipt of applications, visa offices will recommend that they contact the body for their occupation and become familiar with the credential requirements including prior learning assessment, work experience and language proficiency.

Some regulatory bodies have begun to institute pre-arrival preliminary assessments, to introduce certainty for prospective migrants as to whether they will be able to practice in their field upon arrival, and to clarify what additional training or licensing they may be required to undergo once in Canada. For example in the field of pharmacy, a two-level system of regulation applies, both national and provincial. The Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada has begun to offer pre-arrival testing of international pharmacy graduates prior to their arrival in Canada at select limited locations. Once landed, they are still required to undergo the clinical examination, and then any provincial body licensing or membership requirements. The first step, however, is being conducted overseas, so that the prospective migrant is clearer on his or her chances of success, and on what is required to become fully registered once in the country.

For overseas post-secondary education assessment, there is no national body that assesses qualifications to Canadian standards. The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) provides information and links to provincial bodies for both education and professional body assessment. In British Columbia the principal body for education credentials is the International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES). An ICES assessment involves establishing equivalency and authentication of foreign gained education qualifications for the purposes of employment or further study. However, there is no national or provincial Qualifications Framework against which to assess those qualifications. Further, there is no quality assurance body or function to support benchmarking of foreign credentials against Canadian gained education, or to assess the quality of the granting



institution.¹⁸ Thus, for some employers, regulatory bodies and advanced education institutions, an ICES evaluation is not recognized as a definitive statement of equivalence. Nor in many cases, from the perspective of the skilled migrant, does the evaluation assist in obtaining skilled employment in the field of overseas training or education.¹⁹

4. Employment

In all three immigration programs described above, the offer of skilled employment plays a role. It is essential for the TFW Program and the PNP. It is beneficial to applicants in the permanent Skilled Worker Program as it increases the point count, however due to the length of time for approval under this category, overseas Skilled Worker Program applicants with job offers are more rapidly assessed for entry via the PNP.

Employers have some opportunities to recruit overseas via job fairs, either those coordinated by the various overseas posts or provincial governments, or sector specific. If the employer wishes to make an on-the-spot job offer to a prospective migrant, both the TFW Program and PNP offer some certainty through the pre-approval mechanism. However, the lack of clarity around FCR in Canada, both as a unified national – or even provincial – system with recognized, established levels of qualifications formalized in the immigration process, makes overseas skilled recruitment a challenge for employers.

¹⁸ There is a Quality Assurance Framework of the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada, but its function is rather to support consistent procedural standards by member Evaluation Services across the country.

¹⁹ These are observations made in the Business Council of BC study “*Foreign Credential Recognition for Skilled Immigrants to British Columbia: Looking Beneath, Above and Beyond*” (May 2006).



G. Best Practices

Each country investigated in this study has been grappling with skills shortages in their economies. At the same time, they are looking at ways to leverage the immigration system to meet labour market needs. Their responses have all included policy shifts and procedural adjustments to help meet these shortages. The changes have been oriented around streamlining their requirements for entry, premised on the recognition that they need to be competitive in attracting skilled foreign workers, and timely in facilitating the requirements of their employers – now and into the future. There are several remarkably common elements among Canada, New Zealand and Australia in their policy responses. These have been observed elsewhere with respect to an international comparison of Australia, Canada, New Zealand (and the United Kingdom),²⁰ and apply here:

- Prioritized skilled migration recently
- Diversified immigrant source countries and skill levels
- Utilized points systems designed to improve selection objectivity while maximizing employment outcomes
- Increased scope for “two step” migration (transition from temporary to permanent status)

The divergence of the more specific responses of the three comparator countries in the four principal areas (LIFE) reflects local context and circumstances, and tends to be driven by the degree of commitment of each country to streamline its system, as well as to adjust its policies to address unintended consequences of previous policies.

The following are some global areas of best practice observed throughout our research:

²⁰ Bob Birrell, Leslyanne Hawthorne and Sue Richardson, (2006). *Evaluation of the General Skilled Migration Categories Report*. Australia Department of Immigration and Citizenship.



Responsiveness/Competitiveness

It is instructive that while all countries – including Canada – have undergone immigration policy reviews and changes in the past five to seven years, each of the comparator countries is again undergoing a comprehensive review of immigration policy and practices. This signals several important shifts:

- the increased emphasis on skilled/economic migration requires that policy be more rapidly responsive to emerging needs in the economy
- immigration-receiving countries are seeing the global skills market in more competitive terms and adjusting to attract the best and the brightest
- there is always room for improvement in streamlining the system and integrating the related areas of labour market information, credential recognition and employment

As the systems in Ireland, and particularly in New Zealand and in Australia keep evolving, it is worth reiterating that this report represents discoveries that reflect a point in time – the prevailing situation that existed on the ground at the time of our visit.

Labour market/employer needs in the permanent migration system

Canada is looked upon by other comparable countries as a leader in establishing a points system, and in taking a human capital approach to migration. However, it is increasingly evident from research on domestic skilled migrant outcomes and comparative analyses of other countries, that to engage in a permanent skilled/economic migration program means to incorporate some indicator of labour market need for the skilled occupation. As we have illustrated, the degree to which labour market demand drives migration selection can be very strong (Australia and Ireland), or balanced with other criteria important to the values of the receiving country (New Zealand). In all cases, the principal migration programs operated in each country (acknowledging Ireland does not have a permanent category) incorporate some labour market indicator of skills need.

Retention of skilled migrants

The employer sponsored and temporary programs operating in each country range in their reliance on formal LMI from a relatively strict listing of eligible occupations (Australia) to a



more open, employer driven approach (Ireland's top Green Card category and New Zealand). However, in each country, a flexible option is available for employers to meet their skilled employment needs quickly, on at least a temporary basis. In each case, a pathway to permanent residence, and ultimately citizenship, is also available and clear.

Despite the trend of some highly skilled migrants to remain flexible and make multiple moves (to various countries) over their career, the pathway to residency/citizenship is important for many migrants who wish to settle permanently with their families in a new country. The ways in which each country handles the approval process for temporary as opposed to permanent migrants is instructive. New Zealand, for example, has reduced criteria for the temporary worker, and the character and health checks are not triggered until the worker applies for permanent residence under the Work to Residence program. The completeness of the checks depends on the level of commitment of each side to short or long-term presence in the country, and leads to a more rapid approval of the temporary worker.

Qualifications Framework

The foreign credential recognition process is handled quite differently in each country, yet the emphasis on a formalized system of recognition is very much in common. It is striking that all three comparator countries (with Ireland being the most recent) have developed a Qualifications Framework against which to benchmark qualifications, skills and competencies as well as for quality assurance. The Frameworks are used in the migration context in the various countries to:

- establish equivalence of international education, training and skill development
- translate that level to migration points (New Zealand)
- signal to employers the implied skills and qualifications associated with a level in familiar terms
- signal to migrants how their qualifications match (or not), and what employment and/or further training pathways are available



The degree of integration of FCR into the migration process varies across the countries investigated. Ireland has perhaps the least formalized requirement for international qualifications assessment built into the immigration program. It appears that the more employer-reliant approach in Ireland is related to the requirement of a job offer and jointly signed application form. The Australian system is the most formalized, requiring up-front qualifications assessment (and determination of equivalence) prior to commencing the immigration process, for most visa categories. In New Zealand, qualifications assessment is linked into the immigration process slightly differently; through bonus point eligibility for Long Term Skill Shortage List occupations. Additionally, some professional bodies encourage qualifications assessment prior to arrival, and certainly require it prior to taking up employment in New Zealand. It may be that the less emphasis a country has on a job offer as a pre-condition for migration, the greater is the necessity of having a migrant's qualifications evaluated. The skilled migrant who arrives without arranged employment arguably needs more certainty that their skills and education will be recognized by employers in the new job market.

Employer Oriented Program Goals

Employer skills needs are most directly expressed on an individual basis through demand-driven programs that facilitate direct overseas recruitment. The options that are somewhat more formalized and overlay direct employer need with systematic labour market analysis help focus even temporary skill shortage on areas of genuine need. In the end, these programs are arguably more responsive to the overall need of the economy and society by offering more stable employment and paths to permanence to those who want to stay. The countries that rely on foreign workers solely to fill temporary employment gaps may have different program objectives than do those who are relying on migration to fill skills shortages and to meet labour force and population goals.

More specific areas of best practice drawn from each country are presented below, as key areas that represent possible application for British Columbia and Canada:



Ireland

1. Qualifications assessment regime.

Considering that each comparator country operates a Qualifications Framework, the Irish system appears to offer a comprehensive system that is predicated on skills attainment and outcomes, and maps qualifications on these bases. This approach arguably better incorporates the requirements across a range of occupations than does a strict listing of the qualifications/credentials obtained.

New Zealand

1. Employer needs reflected in the Immediate and Long Term Skill Shortage Lists.

The utility of the Immediate and Long Term Skill Shortage Lists is drawn in large part from the way in which they are developed: employers have a direct, formal process by which to express skilled labour needs and that feeds directly into the immigration program. Further, the way in which these lists are operationalized in the migration system allows for a calibrated response based on the severity of the shortage.

2. Qualifications assessment connected to migration process.

New Zealand's incorporation of the qualifications assessment process into the migration process is aimed toward ensuring that migrants' qualifications are recognized in New Zealand, making them able to work once they arrive. The requirement for equivalence assessment or provisional registration prior to the approval stage introduces certainty to the prospective migrant (and his or her sponsor, if applicable) as to the ability to work in the field of education and training.

3. Professional body coordination with Immigration Service.

The close collaboration of the Medical Council of New Zealand and the process engaged in by the Electrical Workers Board to coordinate their requirements with those of Immigration



helps avoid the catch-22 of having migration approval depend on professional body approval and vice versa.

4. **Immigration outreach.**

The formation of the Relationship Managers to liaise with employers, industry and the community helps clarify the program options and procedures for overseas recruitment, and can help New Zealand employers meet their skill needs more rapidly.

Australia

1. **National authority on pre-assessment of qualifications.**

Two elements of Australia's system are attractive from the perspective of qualifications assessment: first, national standards introduce some commonality of occupational norms across the confederation, and second, the pre-assessment function introduces some certainty concerning the ability to work upon arrival.

2. **Labour market analysis integration into immigration process.**

The listing of not only of skilled but needed occupations and the assignment of points to various skilled occupations help orient the immigration system to those areas in high demand, and therefore to increase the prospects of successful integration of the skilled migrant.

3. **Temporary visa options.**

The Business (Long Stay) or 457 visa offers broad flexibility to both employer and prospective migrant, balancing the relatively broad definition of eligible occupations (and no need for a labour market test) with obligations that encourage utilisation of the program out of genuine need.



4. **Labour agreements.**

These function as a “catch-all” category to ease employer recruitment in a range of situations not otherwise covered by the permanent or temporary employer-sponsored visa classes.

5. **Immigration outreach.**

The Regional/Industry/Metropolitan Outreach Officer functions help Australian employers recruit skilled workers by raising awareness of employer-sponsored options and targeting the right program to meet the employer’s needs, meaning skill shortages are addressed more effectively.



H. Recommendations

Based on our findings of the skilled migration systems in Ireland, New Zealand and Australia, we highlighted some areas of best practice for suitable adaptation and application to BC and Canada. In what follows, we advance some proposals to further enhance the responsiveness and flexibility of the skilled migration system. Some recommendations are inter-related, as certain best practices uncovered do not stand alone, but rather are components operating within the overall system. Specifically, we recommend the following for further consideration.

For British Columbia

1. Produce one set of labour market information for BC

In the other jurisdictions investigated, labour market information and analysis are conducted by one entity, and in the unitary states (Ireland and New Zealand) LMI branches operate under the same department as the migration program. In Australia, the LMI developed by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations feeds into various other bodies, including Department of Immigration and Citizenship for migration and state bodies for state- and regional-sponsored visa programs. In British Columbia, labour market analysis is conducted by both Service Canada and BC PNP separately, presently directed to slightly different purposes with slightly different results. Yet, each entity is relying on much the same sources for data and other information. We recommend that Service Canada and BC PNP consider producing together a single set of LMI for consistency, efficiency (reduce duplication), and better overall intelligence for both temporary and permanent migration program purposes. As a starting point, consideration might be given to producing more, better and better coordinated LMI.

2. Offer a “one-stop shop” for both permanent and temporary foreign workers

From the employers’ perspective, it would be helpful to deal with one individual or entity when seeking foreign workers and to understand the full menu of options. Since BC PNP is



already responsible initially for the fast-track permanent program, an expanded and properly-resourced BC PNP could also facilitate the skilled/professional temporary foreign worker program. The model for this is Australia's Regional and Industry Outreach Officers whereby they can speak of all options from the permanent program, the "457" Temporary visa, to other schemes which offers employers flexible terms to recruit skilled overseas workers. The BC PNP is best suited to offer this service as it is regionally-based, dealing directly with employers with closer links to on-the-ground employer needs, and has a procedure in place for evaluating employers for the permanent program. (Alternatively, this function could be performed by BC PNP and CIC/Service Canada in tandem and at once when dealing with employers and offering the entire menu of temporary and permanent migration programs.)

3. Accelerate employer accreditation

The employer driven programs in New Zealand (Employer Accreditation) and Australia (Employer Nomination Scheme) appear to be effective for employers in facilitating recruitment of overseas workers. Our recommendation is for BC PNP to accelerate its plan for accreditation of bone fide employers, especially the larger companies, for a specific duration, such that they need only become accredited once, for multiple recruitments. This would lighten the burden on both sides.

4. Accredite industry associations and Chambers of Commerce as eligible employers

Small and medium size employers would benefit from umbrella organizations such as Industry associations and Chambers of Commerce representing members in accreditation/approval for the TFW Program, and possibly the PNP. New Zealand is presently considering inclusion of local Chambers of Commerce as eligible employers under the Employer Accreditation scheme. Once an Association or Chamber becomes approved, the onus would be on it and the collective membership to put forward credible employer members for overseas recruitment. This arrangement would reduce administrative time on the part of the assessing authority, and would help encourage participation among smaller



employers who are probably least comfortable or capable of accessing the present system, and could stand to benefit substantially from the temporary or permanent recruitment of a skilled foreign worker.

5. **Establish a Qualifications Framework for BC**

BC has the opportunity to lead the nation in establishing a coherent system of credentials assessment/qualifications recognition to BC, Canadian and internationally-gained post-secondary awards. As described throughout the investigation, each comparator country has a national Qualifications Framework to harmonize qualifications recognition, with a quality assurance function, and a robust body that conducts assessments. A Qualifications Framework for BC could stand alone or be harmonized with a Canada-wide Framework, as and when and if that happens. (At the same time, the national “Real Seal” occupations can be incorporated into a BC Framework now along with the provincially certified trades.) We note that Australia’s national qualifications assessment structure depends on a tighter federation among its states, therefore we are making this recommendation at the provincial level to acknowledge, first, provincial authority over education and training, and second, the general looser nature of our Canadian federation.

The detailed process involved in ascribing qualifications levels to BC’s advanced education system will be beneficial to international applicants as they can understand what a BC-based qualifications evaluation would mean with respect to employment and prospects for advancement and/or further training. At a minimum, we suggest that such a construct include a qualifications framework, and a single, provincially-designated authority tasked with maintaining the framework, conducting quality assurance, and assessing qualifications. (Such a Framework would also have great utility for others in BC including educators, trainers, education ministries, learners and employers.)

The possible benefits of such a system to BC would include clarity around domestically-gained qualifications, utilisation by PNP and TFW programs to assess foreign workers (and



therefore better employment outcomes in BC), and a demonstration effect on the rest of the country to develop similar provincial systems.²¹

For Canada

6. Increase flow, reduce clog, and provide clarity

Canada's immigration system could function more effectively and rapidly: to help employers better access the overseas talent in the Skilled Worker category; to serve the settlement goals of the immigration program; and to clarify the futures of the migrants in the queue. In terms of international guidance (leaving Ireland aside due to its unique demographic circumstances and European participation), New Zealand and Australia both made major changes to their permanent migrant systems in the early part of the decade. While Australia's strict adherence to a labour market driven model may not fit well with Canada's goals for its immigration program, New Zealand's efforts can provide some guidance and direction in this regard. In concert with other recommendations made above and below, the procedural change to a pool-based system where applicants lodge Expressions of Interest that have clearly defined minimum criteria, are centrally assessed, do not require initial documentation, and are regularly reviewed and selected, appears to have reduced the backlog significantly. Moreover, the up-front statement to applicants that their EOI will only remain in the pool for six months helps keep the system from bogging down with stale applications. The Invitation to Apply stage is where due diligence work begins for both sides.

Also instructive is the pool system in Australia whereby applicants are pre-qualified and permitted to enter the country in numbers as required by the labour market place (i.e. the tap, as it were, can be turned "on" as much as necessary or "off" as the labour market situation warrants).

²¹ We note that TILMA (the Trade, Investment, and Labour Mobility Agreement) between BC and Alberta begins to harmonize occupational credential recognition between the two provinces.



7. Reflect labour market needs in the permanent Skilled Worker program

As observed throughout our investigation, both New Zealand and Australia incorporate their labour market needs into their permanent skilled migration programs via some mechanism in the points system. Their express purpose for doing so is to avoid, as much as possible, a mismatch between the skills migrants bring and the needs of the economy in terms of employment. In order to improve the chances for strong outcomes by skilled migrants to Canada, we recommend that the regional, detailed LMI already developed by Service Canada (and/ or BC PNP) be integrated into the Skilled Worker category points system, appropriately weighted as bonus points. In this way, the emphasis on human capital attributes remains but areas in need are rewarded.

8. Increase flexibility of the Temporary Foreign Worker program

Regardless of whether or not the Temporary Foreign Worker program is situated within the BC PNP, we recommend that its provisions be expanded to reflect some of the innovative elements of the Australian Temporary Business (Long Stay) “457” visa program. The benefits to employers include longer terms of employment, fairly flexible occupational parameters, and relatively rapid processing times (average approval time is four to six weeks from the time of the visa application in Australia). The responsibility of employers to take on travel arrangements and other costs would help balance a relatively flexible occupational listing. Unlike in the Australian model, we do not specifically suggest a minimum salary above local market or collective bargaining agreement–based wages and salaries.

9. Develop strategic Labour Agreements

While we note that pre-approval Labour Market Opinions are available for employers to recruit multiple employees over a period of time, we recommend that HRSDC/Service Canada encourage the further development of Labour Agreements along the lines of those outlined for Australia, that can be negotiated with large employers or on an industry basis for multiple positions and quantities of temporary foreign workers. Two Canadian



precedents of which we are aware are the Alberta oil sands MOU agreed in 2005 among HRSDC, CIC and Alberta Learning, and the software worker fast-track pilot project.

10. Develop Occupations Under Pressure Lists across Canada

The occupations under pressure list for BC and Alberta is a useful addition to the TFW Program as it provides more transparent labour market information and a faster employer process around those occupations experiencing skill shortages. We recommend the expansion of these lists to other provinces. The listing need not be national in scope, as recognition of regional differences is more, not less beneficial to employers and skilled migrants. We base this recommendation on the examples found in all comparator countries, which rely on a listing of occupational shortages to support, if not drive, temporary skilled worker programs.

Further, we note that in recognition of economic cycles, in a period of economic downturn such a listing continues to be useful to signal the (presumably fewer) occupations in demand. The logical extent of such a listing is found in Ireland where, for certain occupations with excess supply from the European market, migration authorities have published a listing of ineligible occupations for which employers may not recruit overseas.

11. Develop and formalize Immigration Officer outreach function

This recommendation is based on best practices in both New Zealand with its team of Relationship Managers and Australia's Regional Outreach Officers and Industry Outreach Officers. Given the increased need for overseas skilled workers, the complexity of the immigration system and the relatively rapid changes to procedures, an immigration outreach function is a helpful tool to personalize the face of CIC, provide tailored information and clarify the process employers need to undertake to recruit overseas skilled workers. Further, outreach officers can publicize the menu of permanent and temporary programs to specific targeted audiences. (Alternatively, this function could be undertaken in tandem with BC PNP.)



12. Increase prominence of Foreign Credential Recognition in the migration process

This recommendation is drawn from observations made primarily with respect to New Zealand and Australia, as they operate more broadly similar permanent migration systems to Canada than does Ireland. We recommend advancing the timing of FCR in the immigration process, and ultimately formalizing it within the immigration process – albeit a tall order. For FCR to be effective in meeting employers’ expectations of skills and managing migrants’ expectations of employment, it will require a much more structured system than presently exists

Realistically, a fully integrated Canadian qualifications recognition system is a near impossibility in the short term, due to the wide range of provincial responsibility and authority in much of education, training, and professional recognition. Therefore, we recommend, at minimum, that the Skilled Worker category online pre-assessment form and the official application form instruct the prospective migrant to have their qualifications assessed, establish (or adapt an existing) agency along the lines of the Australian Skills Recognition Information website to provide clear, portal-based information on qualification assessment. We also recommend that, taking into account recommendation #5, eventually the permanent skilled migration system refer applicants to relevant authorities in the province in which they plan to settle, and require a qualifications assessment report (such as that issued by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority or the various national Australian bodies expressly tasked with assessing equivalency of overseas qualifications) to accompany the migration application. In this way, prospective migrants have a clear understanding of their position in the Canadian labour market (and province of choice), and employers have confidence in the level of qualifications migrants bring, even if they are not familiar with the standards of the overseas credential or granting institution.



As formidable as the above task may be to inform about the variances amongst the provinces, it should be made abundantly clear to prospective immigrants that there is also a distinction between credentials recognition for work and licensing to work.

13. Accelerate national harmonization of regulatory standards

While we are aware that the regulatory bodies of several major provincially regulated professions are engaged in discussions of harmonization of standards, we recommend that this process be accelerated (and started in the case of those who are not yet engaged).²² The difficulties of multiple systems of registration and varying stringency of qualifications in a federal system are not unique to Canada. Australia's experience to date provides some instructive guidelines. The COAG (Council of Australian Governments) process currently underway around harmonizing health professions registration standards shows that collaborative action on the part of government authorities and the responsible professional bodies can lead to the prospect of an agreed common system of baseline occupational levels and recognition among jurisdictions. Within Canada, the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement signed by BC and Alberta also represents a starting point for harmonizing provincial standards.

14. Begin work on a Qualifications Framework for Canada

Sooner or later, such a Framework will be necessary to harmonize the various credentials offered (assessed and recognized for equivalence based on the core competencies behind each level of credential) by the many provinces across Canada. It will be highly desirable to establish such a Framework for comparison with those Frameworks not only in Ireland, New Zealand and Australia but also in the United Kingdom, the European Union, South Africa and so on.

²² We note that 49 skilled trades have resolved national recognition concerns by establishing the Inter-Provincial Standards "Red Seal" Program, which facilitates skilled labour mobility across the country.



In General

15. Improve quality and timeliness of information

Overall, we observed in the comparator countries that migration information for overseas skilled workers is well-organized and robust. We recommend that Canada's information for migrants in the four key areas of labour market information, immigration programs, foreign credential recognition and employment be improved as to content, timeliness and completeness. Pathways of information can be compiled in one portal (beginning with CIC), with links to relevant bodies and further information. One model for developing a "one-stop-shop" specifically for qualifications assessment and recognition is Australia's ASRI (Australian Skills Recognition Information), the web-based resource that explains procedures for pre-arrival assessment, and provides an A-Z listing of post-arrival registration bodies and requirements. There is a need for more and clear information up-front, at the beginning of the process.

16. Establish service standards

It appeared in the comparator countries that complete information for migrants, and up-front clear statements of requirements and eligibility for entry helped manage the expectations of migrants around how long they would have to wait for approval, whether and how they could be recognized to work in their field, and how long their application status would be valid. We recommend that all those involved with Canada's migration system for permanent and temporary migration programs and particularly credential assessment and registration bodies, provide realistic up-front information on the exact procedures and likely turnaround timelines for approval to enter and work in Canada.

To conclude, and without further amplification, the implementation of most, if not all of the above, will not only lead to an improved system for employers seeking foreign workers but also better management of expectations on the part of employers and prospective foreign workers.

Appendix A – Comparative Policy Summary

Ireland

Labour Market Need LMI and analysis conducted by Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment, including assessment of job vacancies and occupational forecasting. DETE develops lists of occupations in demand at various skill levels and salary ranges. Employers recruiting high skilled and highly paid overseas workers generally accepted by DETE, particularly in high growth sectors of economy.

Immigration Ireland operates under EU rules concerning free movement of workers. With EU-10 accession and increased EU labour force, fewer Work Permits issued for overseas workers in lower-skilled and -paying occupations.

New **Green Card** system introduced early 2007 – two salary levels, aimed at high-skilled occupations. For lower salary category, occupation must be on shortage list.

Work Permit system revised to include two lower-salary and -skilled migrant occupations. Green Card occupations not required to pass EU labour market test (i.e. no suitable EU worker available to fill vacancy); Work Permit occupations are. Either employer or employee can lodge application with DETE.

There is no category for immediate permanent residence for migrant skilled workers. Green Cards issued for two years and are renewable indefinitely, with path to permanent residence after two years. Work Permits can be renewed for a three year term and then indefinitely.

FCR Qualifications recognition addressed by **professional bodies** for regulated professions. Documentary evidence of certified qualifications relevant to the position to be supplied to DETE together with Card/Permit application. Medical professionals (at either Green Card or Work Permit level) must supply registration/validation of qualifications from relevant Irish authority.

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland – facilitates assessment of overseas qualifications (via appropriate Irish awarding body) to determine comparability with Irish education and training system on **Qualifications Framework**. Knowledge, skills & competencies of foreign trained worker are translated to levels on Irish QF to facilitate professional assessment, employer decision-making concerning overseas training or experience, and educational attainment for purpose of ongoing study.

Employment The starting point for migration is a job offer. For all but EU nationals, the only way to enter Ireland as a skilled worker is to secure an offer of



employment prior to lodging an application for immigration. Irish approach is that employers know own needs best, thus migration policy is labour-market oriented. National job bank operated by FAS (national training & employment authority).

New Zealand

Labour Market Need Conducted by Department of Labour – LMI branch, monitoring job vacancies, employer interviews regarding skill needs and other sources. Data feeds into development of Immediate and Long Term Skill Shortage Lists.

Immediate Skill Shortage List includes regional breakdown of skill shortage by occupation. No bonus immigration points available for applicants whose occupations are on this list, usually granted temporary work permit, with path to permanent residence.

Long Term Skill Shortage List has bonus points for skilled migration applicants with occupations on this list. List posted on Immigration website also provides NZ equivalents for academic training, requirements for registration and work experience and listing & contact information for regulatory body.

Immigration **Skilled Migrant Category** – points based (pass mark 120) assessment based on skilled employment, qualifications, relevant work experience, age, family in NZ & partner attributes. Can obtain bonus points for employment, experience or qualifications in occupations on Long Term Shortage List. Applicants submit Expression of Interest, which is placed in a “pool”. Selection takes place every two weeks, automatic selection for further processing if score of 140 or more. If between 100 and 140, applicant stays in the pool and may be selected based on criteria set from time to time by Minister of Immigration.

Work to Residence – applicant may be approved to work in NZ for specified period for a particular employer, and may apply for permanent residence after two years.

Employer Accreditation – temporary program where accredited employer may recruit offshore workers, labour market test conducted by local Dept. of Labour office. Foreign worker makes application under Talent (Accredited Employers) Work Policy, on temporary basis, but includes path to residence.

FCR Applicants for regulated occupation must be able to show eligibility to work in NZ in that occupation (via provisional registration certificate from registration body) prior to work permit being granted by New Zealand Immigration Service. **Professional registration bodies** are responsible for



qualifications assessment of applicants in those occupations.

Qualifications Recognition Service (branch of New Zealand Qualifications Authority) will conduct pre- or full assessment of overseas qualifications. Assessment report indicates equivalent level on **Qualification Framework**, and authenticates the documents submitted. QF level is then translated into points for immigration.

Employment Offer of employment plays important role in immigration process. For permanent Skilled Migrant Category, offer of employment can mean additional points (50 for offer, 60 for actual employment), and if offer is in area of long term skill shortage, can earn the applicant bonus points. Offer of employment is essential in the temporary skilled programs. No national job bank, but Immediate and Long Term Skill Shortage Lists indicate skills needed in NZ with links to sector specific job information, together with list of sectors identified as future growth areas. Some overseas job fairs held in US and UK, mostly sector specific.

Australia

Labour Market Need Department of Employment & Workplace Relations conducts labour market analysis around the country, including vacancies and occupation forecasting, with the migration policy & analysis section developing the Skilled Occupations List and the Migration Occupations in Demand List.

Skilled Occupations List (SOL) – developed to define the skilled occupations in Australia. Not a reflection of skill shortage, but applicant under the General Skilled Migration program must designate an occupation on this list to be eligible for permanent migration.

Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL) – Skills shortages are linked to the immigration process via the MODL. Applicants with occupations on the MODL earn extra points on the General Skilled Migration visa application (20 points if have job offer, 15 points if not).

LMI also feeds into regional skill shortages and state-level needs, and other visa classes which address regional shortages and/or state sponsored visas.

Immigration **General Skilled Migration (Skilled Independent)** – principal category for permanent skilled migration. Points based system, where pass mark is 120. If applicant doesn't meet pass mark, but is above the pool mark (70) application will be held in pool for up to 2 years and can be drawn if pass mark is lowered. Occupation on MODL increases point count. Occupations on SOL are assigned various point levels for immigration purposes (from 40 to 60 points). Applicant must have had skills assessed as suitable by relevant



assessing authority prior to lodging immigration application.

Employer Nominated (Permanent) – employer makes permanent & ongoing offer of employment to overseas candidate for a skilled occupation on Employer Nomination Scheme Occupation List. Employer must offer minimum salary level on List. Overseas worker must have had skills assessed as suitable by relevant assessing authority prior to issuance of visa.

Temporary Business (Long Stay) “457” Visa – most common program for employers to recruit overseas workers on temporary basis. Employer sponsorship is two years, visa valid up to four years. Minimum skill and salary levels apply – occupation must be on “gazetted” list (broad listing of skilled occupations).

Labour Agreements – formal arrangements between Department of Immigration & Citizenship (DIAC) and employer to recruit number of overseas workers for both permanent and temporary employment. Grants permission to recruit larger numbers of employees, in areas where genuine shortage exists but is not listed for employer sponsored migration, or where occupation not covered under Australian Standard Classification of Occupations.

FCR In general, permanent (Skilled Independent) visa applicants and some other visa classes are required to submit their qualifications to relevant Australian assessing authority for equivalency to Australian standards prior to lodging application for immigration or temporary work.

Regulated professions have combination of national councils and state boards which require registration and/or licensing. Depending on profession, applicant may undergo two step process: national assessment body pre-approval of qualifications as meeting Australian standards for the purpose of immigration, and state level registration or licensing to practice upon arrival. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG), representing primarily state-level governments, is presently consulting to harmonize standards for registration and accreditation across regulated fields.

Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) – does pre-application skills assessment for equivalency to Australian standards for permanent migration applicants with trades experience and/or qualifications. Not accreditation (this is separate process conducted onshore). Some regulated trades also require state licensing upon arrival in order to practice.

National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) – assesses overseas post secondary qualifications for equivalency to Australian levels on **Qualifications Framework**. Also conducts pre-application skills assessment for purposes of immigration. Does not assess specific program content and does not generally authenticate. Maintains database of over 100 Country



Education Profiles of approved tertiary education institutions, grouped by institution type. NOOSR also advises DIAC on the gazettal of assessing authorities (e.g. Australian Computer Society, Australian Nursing & Midwifery Council etc).

Employment An offer of employment in Australia is beneficial for points in the General Skilled Migration permanent category, and is essential for the employer sponsored permanent and temporary categories. DIAC operates series of Regional Outreach Officers, Industry Outreach Officers and Student Liaison Officers to work with Australian employers, sector associations and overseas student groups to raise awareness and facilitate overseas recruitment and migration processes to fill Australia’s skills needs. DIAC and overseas embassy posts also hold overseas job fairs which provide venues for employer recruitment of skilled workers. Skill-matching database exists (not a job bank), where visa applicants can place occupational profile that employers can view and select from.

Canada

Labour Market Need Regional LMI developed by Service Canada, feeds into recent BC & Alberta lists of skills shortages. Labour Market Opinions issued by Human Resources & Social Development Canada (HRSDC) for Citizenship & Immigration Canada (CIC) Temporary Foreign Worker program work permit.

LMI not connected to CIC points system for permanent skilled immigration.

Immigration **Permanent Skilled Worker Program** – points based (pass mark 67). Points awarded in five categories: education, official language, age, work experience, arranged employment, adaptability. Points system not connected to labour market need. To obtain points for arranged employment, it must be classified on National Occupations Classification (NOC) as Skill Type O (Managerial) or Skill Level A or B (requiring university, college or apprenticeship training). Once application is lodged, local visa officer will contact to review application, supporting documents etc.

Temporary Foreign Worker Program – offer from employer must precede application for Work Permit by foreign worker. HRSDC must issue positive or neutral Labour Market Opinion (LMO) for worker to be approved.

Provincial Nominee Program – Operated in several provinces including BC. Permanent skilled migration program where employer makes offer of permanent full time employment to foreign skilled worker, and the province “nominates” the proposed worker to CIC. Expedited processing of application.

FCR Not explicitly tied to immigration process. Range of bodies conduct



assessment of academic and professional/trade credentials generally at provincial level. Applicant is responsible for submitting credentials to relevant **professional regulatory body** in the province where they wish to work. Pre-assessment not required for immigration purposes, although some regulatory bodies do conduct on- and off-shore pre-assessments (e.g. Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada, some provincial associations of professional engineers).

Employment Offer of employment required for BC Provincial Nominee Program and Temporary Foreign Worker program. Not required for Permanent Skilled Worker Program. Some overseas “Emigrate” fairs held such as in London UK, but broader in scope than solely for employment, and multi-nation participation. Also some sector specific job fairs. National job bank exists, managed by Service Canada.



Appendix B – Interview Schedule

United Kingdom

London

December 8, 2006

Canadian High Commission

Robert Orr, Minister - Counsellor (Immigration)

Australian High Commission

Steve Davis, Minister (Immigration)

Lara Wood Gladwin

Ireland

Dublin

December 11, 2006

Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment

Sean Murray, Principal Officer, Economic Migration Policy Unit

Marie Dempsey, Labour Market Policy

Sabha Greene, Employment & Training Strategy

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

Carmel Kelly, Coordinator, Qualifications Recognition

December 12, 2006

FAS Training & Employment Authority

Skills & Labour Market Research Unit

Brian McCormick, Research Officer

December 13, 2006

Irish Business & Employers Confederation

Heidi Loughheed, Social Policy Executive

Forfas (National Policy & Advisory Board for Enterprise, Trade, Science, Technology & Innovation)

Conor Hand, Quantitative Economist, Enterprise & Trade Policy Division



New Zealand

Auckland

February 12, 2007

New Zealand Association of Migration & Investment

Bernard Walsh, Chair

Bill Milne, Vice Chair

February 13, 2007

Electrotechnology & Telecommunications Industry Training Organization (ETITO)

Marilyn Brady, CEO

Michael Frampton, Manager

ICT-New Zealand

Ross Peat, Co-Chair

Wellington

February 14, 2007

Department of Labour – Immigration Branch

Ben Long, Research Analyst

Daryl Slatter, Policy Analyst

Nursing Council of New Zealand

Barry Ayling, Registration Manager

Department of Labour – Labour Market Information Branch

Sarah Van Der Hayden, Project Manager, Job Vacancy Monitoring Programme

Fiona Beardslee, Senior Advisor, Labour Market Planning & Coordination

February 15, 2007

New Zealand Business Roundtable

Roger Kerr, Executive Director

Department of Labour – Workforce Service Delivery

Grayson Rowse, Analyst

New Zealand Qualifications Authority – Qualification Recognition Services

Pamela Hulston, Manager,

Wayne Sloane

Janice McCardle

Tertiary Education Commission

Richard Dirks, Senior Policy Analyst



February 16, 2007

Department of Labour - Workforce Service Delivery

Matt Hoskin, Manager, Primary Relationships

Medical Council of New Zealand

Philip Pigou, Chief Executive

Joan Crawford, Registration Manager

Department of Building & Housing

Electrical Workers Licensing Group

John Sickels, Registrar/Manager

Joanna Owens

Business New Zealand

Phil O'Reilly, Chief Executive

Nic Green, Manager, Education, Training & Productivity

Australia

Canberra

February 19, 2007

Department of Immigration & Citizenship

Australian Capital Territory Regional Outreach Office

Tim Ricketts, Deputy Territory Director

Peter Knobel, Branch Manager, Business & Regional Partnerships

Vicky Geraghty, Regional Outreach Unit

Department of Immigration & Citizenship

Malcolm Paterson, Director, Business Skills & Specialist Entry

Peter Speldewinde, Director, Skilled Migration Section

Jim Dawson, Assistant Director, Skilled Migration Section

Jacqueline Daly, Director, Business Employment Section

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Council

Karen Cook, CEO

Judy Conroy, International Section Manager

February 20, 2007

Department of Employment & Workplace Relations

Jane Press, Director, Migration Policy & Analysis Section

Ian Robinson, Director Skills Shortages - Training Strategies



Trades Recognition Australia

Andried Jamonts, Director, Operations

Department of Education, Science & Training

National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition

Miriam Edwards, Assistant Director

Di Roberts, Director, Overseas Qualification Recognition Unit

Kaitlyn Bowden, Regional Officer, Overseas Qualification Recognition Unit

Office of Workplace Services

Sherry Pullen, General Manager, Policy

February 21, 2007

Canadian High Commission

Sharon Chomyn, Counsellor (Immigration)

Sydney

February 21, 2007

Canadian Consulate General

Allan Martin, Consul (Immigration)

February 22, 2007

Australian Industry Group

Ron Bargary, Legal Counsel, Workplace Relations

New South Wales Medical Board

Dr. Alison Reid, Medical Director

February 23, 2007

Department of Immigration & Citizenship

New South Wales Regional Outreach Office

Ian Moore, Regional Outreach Officer

Fiona Clarke, Student Liaison Officer

Nurses & Midwives Board of New South Wales

Michael Cleary, Executive Director

Australian Computer Society

Dennis Furini, Chief Executive

Sam Burrell, General Manager



Canada

Vancouver

BC Ministry of Economic Development

BC Provincial Nominee Program

Ian Mellor, Director

Michael Chow

Citizenship & Immigration Canada, BC/Yukon Region

Marilyn McGrath, Regional Director General

Service Canada, BC/Yukon Region

Hal Howie, Director, Program Services

Charles Perrin, Project Manager, Skills & Learning

Service Canada, BC/Yukon Region

Robert Matioli, Research Analyst, Labour Market Analysis Unit

National Capital Region

November 28-30, 2006

HRSDC - Workplace Skills Branch

Claudette Russell, Director, FCR Agency Task Force

HRSDC - Workplace Skills Branch

Policy Research Analysis

Anthony Muttu, Director

Samuel Laryea, A/Manager

Citizenship & Immigration Canada

Luce Charbonneau, Senior Policy Advisor, Selection Branch

Patrick MacKenzie, Senior Analyst, Settlement Branch

Australian High Commission

Christine Pearce, Principal Migration Officer

Irish Embassy

David Keating, Second Secretary

Appendix C – Comparative Case Studies

1. Registered Nurse

	Immigration Application	Professional Body Assessment	Principal Criteria	Registration to Practice
Ireland	Pre-registration required to accompany immigration application	Irish Nursing Board Fee: €175	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language assessment (IELTS) ▪ School of nursing transcript ▪ Previous practice license 	Irish Nursing Board
New Zealand	Pre registration required for migration application	Nursing Council of New Zealand Processing Fee: NZ\$400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language assessment (IELTS or OET) ▪ School of nursing transcript ▪ Previous practice license ▪ Police check 	Nursing Council of New Zealand Registration Fee NZ\$50
Australia	Pre-assessment by ANMC required for migration application	Australian Nursing & Midwifery Council Conducts migration skills assessment for immigration only National standards of practice (set by ANMC); state/territory registration bodies (requirements may differ) Assessment fee A\$630	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language assessment (IELTS) ▪ School of nursing transcript ▪ Previous practice license & standing with previous board ▪ Proof of employment 	Nurses and Midwives Board of New South Wales Similar documentation required. If from Canada, US, UK, Ireland, NZ, quick registration process, no supervisory period (comparable health systems). Enrolment Fee A\$80.
Canada	Must secure sponsor employer. Temporary registration required for forwarding to Svc Canada for LMO and then Work Permit.	College of Registered Nurses of BC (no national nursing body, but standardized national Registered Nurse examination) Processing Fee: C\$212	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language assessment (IELTS, TOEFL) ▪ School of nursing transcript ▪ Previous practice record ▪ Criminal record check ▪ Must pass Canadian Registered Nurse Examination (Fee \$485) ▪ No fast tracking based on job offer in hand 	College of Registered Nurses of BC Full registration issued only after all criteria completed



Ireland Notes

After assessment Irish Nursing Board can recommend Period of Adaptation in Irish hospital prior to full registration.

New Zealand Notes

If the overseas nurse is not assessed as fully competent initially, the Nursing Council may recommend a Competence Assessment Program – 6 to 8 weeks combined theoretical & clinical placement. Some nurses come on visitor visas to do the program, then re-submit application for registration.

Australia Notes

1. Within ANMC process for migration, if not assessed as suitable, applicant may be required to do Competency Based Assessment Program.
2. At state (NSW) licensing body level, they also can recommend competency assessment via College of Nurses.
3. The Nurses and Midwives Board of New South Wales relies on NOOSR for some evaluation of qualifications, and registration boards in source countries to verify qualifications and practice history.

Canada Notes

1. Applicant can obtain 9 month temporary registration after all other requirements met but waiting to take Canadian Registered Nurse Examination.
2. Nurse is eligible under PNP, must be nominated by employer and application submitted to Health Match. No requirement for previous BC work experience (see Physician below).



2. *Physician (General)*

	Immigration Application	Professional Body Assessment	Principal Criteria	Registration to Practice
Ireland	<p>1. must have minimum of temporary registration.</p> <p>2. Then can apply for job in IE</p> <p>3. must provide evidence of both prior to submitting migration application</p>	<p>Medical Council of Ireland</p> <p>Conducts temporary assessment for supervised experience in Irish hospital prior to full registration.</p> <p>Recognizes educ. qualifications listed on World Health Organization Directory of Medical Schools</p> <p>Fee: €700</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language assessments (IELTS) ▪ Pass Temporary Registration Assessment Scheme exam (some exemptions apply) 	<p>Medical Council of Ireland</p> <p>Full registration only after all criteria completed</p> <p>Registration fee: €425</p>
New Zealand	<p>Pre registration required for migration application</p> <p>Job offer comes before migration app.</p>	<p>Medical Council of New Zealand</p> <p>Administers NZ registration exam</p> <p>Recognizes medical degrees from Australia, UK, and Ireland</p> <p>Grants provisional scope of practice</p> <p>Assessment fee: NZ\$6,200</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language assessment (IELTS) ▪ Pass NZ registration exam Exam fee: \$3,750 ▪ evidence of good standing in previous jurisdiction ▪ police check 	<p>Medical Council of New Zealand</p> <p>Issues annual practicing certificate for scope of practice</p> <p>Registration App. Fee: NZ\$425</p>
Australia	<p>Pre-assessment required for migration application</p> <p>Since physicians now on SOL, no requirement to have pre-arranged job offer</p>	<p>Australian Medical Council</p> <p>Conducts migration skills assessment for immigration only</p> <p>National standards of practice (set by AMC); state/ territory registration bodies (requirements may differ)</p> <p>Assessment fee (for eligibility to sit exam) A\$225</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language assessment (IELTS or OET) ▪ Pass AMC examination (part multiple choice questionnaire, part clinical assessment) Exam Fee: A\$4,340 	<p>New South Wales Medical Board</p> <p>Requires AMC Certificate</p> <p>Verify education documents</p> <p>1 year supervised practice then full registration</p> <p>Application Fee A\$220.</p>

	Immigration Application	Professional Body Assessment	Principal Criteria	Registration to Practice
Canada	Must secure sponsor employer and supervising physician. Temporary registration required for forwarding to Svc Canada for LMO and then Work Permit.	Medical Council of Canada conducts Qualifying Exam (standard to qualify for practice in Canada) Recognizes educ. qualifications listed on World Health Organization Directory of Medical Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pass MCC Evaluating Exam (determines eligibility to take Qualifying Exam) Evaluating Exam fee C\$1,050 ▪ Pass MCC Qualifying Exam Qual. Exam fee C\$2,130 	College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC For Full Registration: Certificate of Standing from previous jurisdiction All diplomas & certificates verified/ authenticated Pass MCC Qualifying Exam Language proficiency Legal standing to work in Canada, and permanent residents in BC Processing fee: C\$100

New Zealand Notes

1. The closer coordination between the Medical Council of New Zealand and NZIS arose out of a previous immigration policy which encouraged international medical graduates to come to New Zealand, with the outcome that approximately 400 overseas trained doctors were not able to be registered in the country. To remedy this, a one-time bridging program was developed and run out of the University of Auckland to help these graduates meet the standards for registration in New Zealand.
2. The Medical Council of NZ has developed a principle of comparable health systems to evaluate internationally trained medical graduates. So far, 16 countries are determined to be comparable. Applicants who have worked in these systems (whether trained there or elsewhere) for 36 to 48 months are eligible to be fast-tracked, which entails 12 months of NZ provisional registration (under supervision) and no examination requirement.

Australia Notes

The multiple choice questionnaire part of the pre-migration assessment (computer based) is held in 13 locations around the world.

Canada Notes

1. College of Physicians & Surgeons of BC may permit temporary registration if not all criteria for full registration are met.
2. BC PNP nominees must already have been practicing on Work Permit in BC for minimum of 9 months and have positive assessment from supervising physician.
3. Health Match BC will assist with job matching and College licensing.



3. *IT Professional*

	Immigration Application	Professional Body Assessment	Principal Criteria	Registration to Practice
Ireland	No pre-assessment required, but must be IT professional (degree, not diploma) to be eligible for Green Card listing of occup. in demand	Higher Education & Training Awards Council (delegated authority from National Qualifications Authority of Ireland)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assesses international qualification for computing to equivalent level on Framework of Qualifications 	N/A Optional membership in Computer Society of Ireland, has optional skills self-assessment tool.
New Zealand	Eligibility for bonus points (as ICT is designated future growth area) may require pre-migration assessment	NZQA (Qualification Recognition Service) Fee: \$450	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assesses international IT qualifications to equivalent level on Qualifications Framework. Will not assess company certified training courses unless embedded in accredited institution degree program. 	N/A Optional membership in New Zealand Computer Society. ICT-NZ emerging umbrella industry organization.
Australia	Pre-assessment required for migration application	Australian Computer Society Conducts migration skills assessment for immigration only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses NOOSR Country Education Profiles to determine skills assessment to Bachelor level equivalency and any other qualifications held by applicant. Assessment fee: A\$350 Also does Recog. of Prior Learning for lengthy work experience Assessment fee: A\$400 	Australian Computer Society Optional membership. Fee: A\$320.
Canada	No pre assessment required. Eligible for fast-track pilot project under TFW Program	N/A ICT Council offers ITP Program for internationally trained professionals. Not required for work in Canada.	N/A	N/A

New Zealand Notes

ICT-New Zealand, the emerging umbrella group for ICT associations in New Zealand notes that while NZQA does not assess vendor certification programs, many employers in the industry do recognize them. An NZQA assessment may still be required to gain bonus points for migration.



4. *Electrician*

	Immigration Application	Professional Body Assessment	Principal Criteria	Registration to Practice
Ireland	No pre-assessment required, but electrician is on list of ineligible Work Permit occupations.	Further Education & Training Awards Council (delegated authority from National Qualifications Authority of Ireland)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ assesses international qualification for electrician to equivalent level on Framework of Qualifications 	Register of Electrical Contractors of Ireland Regulatory body: monitors standards of work, offers courses Membership eligibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Electrician qualification ▪ 3 yrs on site responsibility
New Zealand	Pre-assessment recommended	NZQA (Qualification Recognition Service) Fee: \$450 Assessment also required by Electrical Workers Board for registration purpose. No fee payable for assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NZQA assesses international electrician qualifications to equivalent level on Qualifications Framework. ▪ EWB assesses based on documents (list of certificates from recognized countries), written exam (some available overseas) and practical assessment of 20 skills 	Electrical Workers Board One-time registration required Reg. Fee: NZ\$103. Requires annual license as well. License Fee: NZ\$92
Australia	Pre-assessment required for migration application	Trades Recognition Australia Conducts migration skills assessment for immigration only Assessment fee: A\$300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment on time in trade basis – 7 years for electrical. ▪ Will also assess international qualifications. May also do post-arrival accreditation (if in 1 of 49 trades accredited by TRA) 	New South Wales Office of Fair Trade Annual licence required. License Fee: A\$229. State requirements are competency based. Must have 12 months supervised Australian work post accreditation before full registration. In NSW must take Certificate III wiring course.
Canada	No pre-assessment required Industrial electrician on BC occupation shortage list for TFW Program	Industry Training Authority of BC Authorized in BC to administer Red Seal exam for Industrial Electrician. Assessment Fee C\$120	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To challenge exam, submit documents proving time worked, nature of work, any other qualifications obtained. ▪ Based on time in trade + ½ ▪ Written exam, must know Cdn electrical code 	Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program After passing Red Seal exam, have national registration and recognition.



Ireland Notes

Professional level of electrician is on Green Card eligibility list, suggesting manager/supervisory level.

New Zealand Notes

Electrical Workers Board, (EWB) under Department of Building and Housing, notes that there has been a gap between NZQA assessment and readiness to work in New Zealand as an electrician (as registration is required). EWB is working with NZIS to develop a provisional registration scheme for overseas trained electricians.

Australia Notes

1. Migrant can elect which process to go through for post arrival accreditation/registration assessment. (TRA if in 1 of 49 trades, based on time spent, or state body for competency based assessment.
2. According to TRA, NSW is one of the more stringent licensing jurisdictions. Migrant can go elsewhere to go through less stringent assessment, then move to NSW – under Mutual Recognition arrangements, state has to recognize license for employment purposes.

Appendix D – Comparison of Points Systems

Below is a summary of the major categories of the points systems for the permanent skilled migration categories for Canada, New Zealand and Australia. “Weight” is the proportion of the maximum category value in relation to the required pass mark (therefore totals exceed 100%).

	<i>Maximum eligible points per category</i>					
	<i>Canada</i>		<i>New Zealand</i>		<i>Australia</i>	
	<i>Points</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Education (Cda)/ Qualifications (NZ)/ Skill (Aus)	25	37%	55	39%	60	50%
Language	24	36%			20	17%
Work experience	21	31%	30	21%	10	8%
Employment						
Offer or Current	10	15%	50 (or) 60	36% (or) 43%		
Age	10	15%	30	21%	30	25%
Adaptability/Partner/ Family	10	15%	10	7%	5	4%
Bonus Points						
Employment/Offer			30	21%	20 (MODL)	17%
Work Experience			25	18%		
Local Qualification			30	21%	15	13%
Pass Mark	67		140		120	
Pool Mark*			100		70	

* Note that the Pool Mark has a different function between New Zealand and Australia:

- For New Zealand all Expressions of Interest go into the pool, from which applications with 140 points or more are drawn. Remaining applications in the pool may be drawn on additional eligibility criteria for up to six months.
- For Australia General Skilled Migration applications that are not 120 points or more go into the pool, from which they may be drawn if pass mark is reduced from 120 for up to two years.



Appendix E – Comparative Service Standards

Where possible, we list below the average or stated standard processing times for various assessment processes related to migration, qualifications assessment and registration body approval.

Ireland

Migration

Green Cards	4 - 6 weeks
Work Permits	4 - 6 weeks

Qualifications Assessment

Higher Education & Training Awards Council	service standard not stated
Further Education & Training Awards Council	service standard not stated

Professional Body

Irish Nursing Council	service standard not stated
Medical Council of Ireland	n/a – generally must take TRAS (Temporary Registration Assessment Scheme) exam
Register of Electrical Contractors of Ireland	service standard not stated



New Zealand

Migration – category type

Skilled Migrant Category

between Expression of Interest and
Invitation to Apply – 8 weeks

Between Invitation to Apply and Residence/
Work Permit issue - 4 – 6 weeks (may be
longer depending on local office)

Work to Residence

Conducted when applicant is onshore

Employer Accreditation

3 weeks for employer assessment

Talent (Accredited Employers) Policy

75% in 20 days for applicant assessment

Qualifications Assessment

NZQA Qualification Recognition Svc

20-30 days

Registration Bodies

Nursing Council of New Zealand

service standard not stated

Medical Council of New Zealand

service standard not stated

Whether processing times are stated or not, all agencies emphasize that responses depend on receiving complete, accurate applications with the requisite fee.



Australia

Migration - Visa Type

General Skilled Migration -
Independent

Applying from offshore

Low risk country: 12 months

High risk country: 15 months

Employer Nomination Scheme

service standard not stated (but since
permanent,
likely under same conditions as GSM category)

Temporary “457” Long Stay

From date of foreign visa application

Low risk country: 50% processed in 4 weeks

High risk country: 50% processed in 6 weeks

Labour Agreements

From date of foreign visa application

Low risk country: 50% processed in 4 weeks

High risk country: 50% processed in 6 weeks

Education Qualifications

NOOSR – (tertiary education)

3 months

VETASSESS (vocational education
& training)

6 weeks

Trades Recognition Australia

95% of MODL assessments – 10 working days

95% non-MODL assessments – 20 working

days

Migration Assessment

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Council

6-8 weeks

Australian Medical Council
year

n/a – AMC exam offered several times per

Australian Computer Society

8-10 weeks

Registration Bodies

New South Wales Medical Board

service standard not stated

Nurses & Midwives Board of
New South Wales

Comparative health systems: 2 weeks

Full process: 4 months

NSW Office of Fair Trading

6 weeks



For those agencies that publish their processing times, all emphasize that these service standards depend on receiving complete applications with the requisite fee. Particularly for the education qualifications, verification of overseas qualifications can take longer, as they depend on the foreign institution.



Select References

During our investigation we of course relied heavily on web-based information about the various migration systems to gain a structural understanding of each process. As these are readily available they are not listed here. However, in interviews we were generously provided numerous helpful information materials and policy pieces broadly concerned with immigration in the three comparator countries. These are listed below, and include web locations where possible.

Ireland

Expert Group of Future Skills Needs (2007). *Tomorrow's Skills: Toward a National Skills Strategy*. Accessible via http://www.skillsstrategy.ie/pdfs/egfsn070306_skills_strategy_report_webopt.pdf.

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National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, (2005). *Qualifications Matter: A Brief Guide to the National Framework of Qualifications*.

Ruhs, Martin, (2004). "Ireland: A Crash Course in Immigration Policy," Country Profile prepared for Migration Policy Institute, Washington. Accessible via <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=260>.

New Zealand

Department of Labour, (2006). *Immigration Guide for Employers*.

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New Zealand Qualifications Authority, (2003). *The New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications*. Accessible via <http://www.kiwiquals.govt.nz/publications/docs/regpolicy-nov03.pdf>.



Australia

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