



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Immigration and Citizenship**

## Health & Character Clearances for GSM Applications

### ***PRIORITY GROUP 3 APPLICANTS***

All applicants who meet the following eligibility criteria (Points 1-3 below) are invited to proceed to obtain health and character clearances now.

1. The application was lodged under one of the following visa subclasses between **15 January 2009 and 30 June 2010:**

- Skilled – Independent (Migrant) visa (subclass 175),
  - Skilled – Sponsored (Migrant) visa (subclass 176), or
  - Skilled – Regional Sponsored (Provisional) visa (subclass 475),
- OR

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

- Skilled – Regional Sponsored (Provisional) visa (subclass 487),
- Skilled - Independent (Residence) visa (subclass 885), or
- Skilled – Sponsored (Residence) visa (subclass 886),

Applicants who lodged their application outside of this date range should see below:  
*Applications not in this date range*

2. All applicants aged 16 years or over are nationals of, and in the past 10 years have only ever resided in, a low risk country(ies).

‘Low risk’ applies to nationals from countries which are mentioned in one of the following lists:

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

Applicants from all other countries, and those who have resided for more than 12 months in any other country, should see below: *Applicants not from a ‘low risk’ country*

3. A case officer has not yet contacted you about the application.

If you meet all three criteria you may choose to initiate health and character clearances now, ahead of your application being assigned to a case officer for consideration and a formal request for these clearances being made.

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

Under the current priority processing arrangements it is likely that most Priority 3 applications lodged between the date range listed above will be considered by a case officer within the validity period of medical and character clearances, should these clearances be undertaken now.

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See below: *Priority Processing Arrangements and Validity of Health and Character Clearances*

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

In addition, if you have not already done so you are invited to update DIAC on any change to your circumstances since lodgement of your application. For example, this may include a change to your relationship status, contact information, or a birth in your family. For information on how to do this, see below: *Change in circumstances*

### **Applicants not from a ‘low risk’ country**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Applications not in this date range**

If your application was lodged after the specified date range you should not yet proceed to undertake your health and character clearances.

In this case you are encouraged to periodically check this Processing Update by emailing [gsm.processing@immi.gov.au](mailto:gsm.processing@immi.gov.au) as the date ranges for each visa subclass will change.

### **Benefit of providing Health and Character clearances now**

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

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

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

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

### **Priority Processing Arrangements**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Instructions for Health and Character clearances**

Information on how to obtain a Health clearance is available at:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/allforms/health-requirements/>

Information on how to initiate Character clearances is available at:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/allforms/character-requirements/>

For the Australian Government to determine whether you are of good character, police certificates are required for each country you have lived in for 12 months or more over the last ten (10) years since turning 16 years of age. This includes Australia if you have resided in Australia for 12 months or more during this period.

Each applicant included in the application aged 16 years or over will need to initiate these clearances irrespective of whether they are migrating with you.

The department is aware that in some countries a letter from DIAC is required before an applicant can undertake health and character clearances. For most countries an applicant can proceed with these clearances without this documentation. For those who do require this letter, please note that this will be issued once the application has been allocated to case officer for consideration.

## **Validity of Health and Character clearances**

Health and character clearances have a limited validity period, in most cases 12 months from their date of issue.

As all clearances must be valid for the grant of a visa, it may be necessary for you to undertake a further medical assessment or provide a new character clearance.

You may either choose to wait until a case officer has reviewed your application to determine whether any clearances need to be repeated, or alternatively, follow the information given below. Please note that specific advice on the validity of a clearance is unable to be provided until such time as your application is formally considered by a case officer.

If your medical assessment was undertaken more than 12 months prior (calculated from now) you will need to undertake a new health clearance. Information on how to do so is available at: <http://www.immi.gov.au/allforms/health-requirements/>.

If your character clearance(s) is more than 12 months old a new clearance will be required from the country(ies) in which you have resided for a period of 12 months or more since your application was lodged. Information on how to initiate a character clearance is provided at: <http://www.immi.gov.au/allforms/character-requirements/>

## **Change in circumstances**

If the circumstances of any family members or dependents have changed since lodgement of your application and you are yet to notify DIAC of this change, you should do so by completing the relevant forms listed at: <http://www.immi.gov.au/contacts/visa-enquiries/change.htm>

For example, this may include a change to your relationship status, contact information, or a birth in your family.

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

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

## **Questions**

If after reading this information you are unclear whether or not to undertake these clearances you should *not* take any action. You should wait until your application is allocated to a case officer for consideration. At this time a case officer will review your application and determine if there are any outstanding requirements.

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