

ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA

EMF IRPE Benefits List – Amended June 2008

1. Does a compulsory licence regime(s) exist? If so describe its operation. E.g. must be licensed to practise engineering and sign off engineering work.

There is no compulsory licence regime for professional engineers in Australia, outside Queensland. Queensland has regulated the engineering profession since 1929, the current legislation being the *Professional Engineers Act 2002 QLD*. The Act requires all persons offering engineering services to be registered by a Board that is established under the Act. However, engineers working under supervision of a registered engineer are not normally required to be registered.

In other States and Territories of Australia, certain engineering work falls within legislation that requires some form of registration. This is principally in the building industry. Government agencies and regulatory authorities rely on registration to determine from whom to receive compliance certificates for design and construction. Jurisdictions with legislation that specifically refers to the National Professional Engineers Register (NPER) for this purpose include Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, New South Wales and the Northern Territory.

2. Does a voluntary registration regime(s) exist? If so, describe its operation, and the activities that can only be performed by registered person, e.g. only registered persons allowed to sign off construction-related work and devices inspected under occupational safety and health regulations.

Engineers Australia operates the National Professional Engineers Register (NPER) with policy input from a Board that includes government, community and profession representatives. This is a voluntary registration system, which is offered at no cost to government to facilitate the recognition in legislation of persons competent to perform certain tasks. NPER is called up under building legislation in several jurisdictions as cited previously. Registration on NPER as an in-service inspector of amusement rides and devices is called up in South Australia's Occupational, Health and Welfare Regulations. Registration on NPER as a Pressure Equipment Design Verifier is mentioned in subordinate regulation in Western Australia.

In dealing with several State and Territory jurisdictions that have the constitutional responsibility for regulating most engineering activity in Australia, Engineers Australia advocates a system that we have titled co-regulation. Under a coregulatory system, Engineers Australia sets the competencies for agreed areas of practice and carries out the assessment of applicants for registration; government authorities adopt NPER registration for the purpose of determining who can do certain work. The handling of complaints and disciplinary actions can be assigned to a government agency or Engineers Australia can do it, depending on the detail of the arrangement.

3. Describe the credit that will be given to any person registered on any section of the IRPE without the need to form any further agreements beyond the EMF (i.e. without bilaterals). E.g.
 - a. Credit for holding a suitable qualification

No credit.

A Washington Accord qualification is accepted without any need for further agreements. Applicants holding other qualifications are assessed against the *Australian Engineering Competency Standard Stage 1*.

b. Credit for 7 years' experience

No credit.

c. Credit for 2 years' responsible charge

No credit.

d. Credit for demonstrating competence to the agreed international standard (other than local knowledge)

No credit.

e. Credit for sufficient recent CPD (last 5 years)

A deferred audit.

4. Describe the extra credit that may be achieved beyond that described in 3 through the formation of a bilateral agreement. This credit is only available to registrants on the section of the IRPE to which the specific bilateral applies.

Engineers Australia enters into bilateral agreements with overseas professional associations and licensing bodies. Engineers Australia will agree to admit to CPEng and register on NPER persons admitted to the other party's equivalent status (registration or licensure). For the purpose of recognition under a bilateral agreement, Engineers Australia will generally require:

- an acceptable qualification, which will be:
 - **either** an engineering degree accredited by an organisation as a full signatory to the Washington Accord;
 - **or** an engineering degree recognised by the overseas organisation as being substantially equivalent to an accredited engineering degree, together with:
 - both a minimum of seven years' practical experience since obtaining an engineering qualification,
 - and at least two years in responsible charge of significant engineering work;
- and a period of professional formation and responsible experience in engineering environments under the general supervision of the organisation;
- and evidence of continuing professional development;
- and submission of an engineering practice report or other evidence of competency in the organisation's prescribed format;
- and satisfactory performance at a professional interview conducted by not less than two qualified representatives of the organisation or passing examinations through the other party's normal arrangements.

Accordingly, a bilateral will provide an EMF IRPE with a clear pathway to registration or a licence to practise.

Engineers Australia's policy is to enter bilateral agreements in association with government to government free trade agreements that include trade in services. Such agreements are expected to bind government and statutory bodies that control the practice of professional engineering in the overseas jurisdiction

5. Describe the assessment or other conditions that all registrants, irrespective of which IRPE section they are on, would have to meet prior to registration/licensing, e.g.
- a. Residency requirements for a period of time

Australia applies no residency requirement. Some statutory registration requirements include that a registered person must hold a defined level of professional indemnity insurance to cover work done.

- b. Local employment for a period of time

Australia applies no local employment requirements.

Nevertheless, it is hard for most foreign engineers to enter the Australian workplace without some form of credential, such as MIEAust CPEng awarded by Engineers Australia or registration on the NPER in an area of practice. Accordingly, Engineers Australia is delivering orientation programs in cooperation with Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to help fill a skills shortage here with skilled migrants who are already Australian residents.

- c. Demonstration of local knowledge through an assessment

An adaptation period of no more than one year has been adopted in line with the APEC Engineer manual. The period presupposes engagement in the practice of engineering in the individual's discipline.

The adaptation period may be abbreviated if the applicant can convince an interview panel that they have acquired sufficient local knowledge relevant to registration in the corresponding area of practice. Such knowledge is likely to be Building Regulations, Australian Standards, other codes of practice, code of ethics and the legal framework that exists in Australia.

- d. Demonstration of competence recently tested

A recent demonstration of competency will enable an applicant to prepare for competency assessment in Australia. However, in the absence of a bilateral agreement, an applicant will be required to satisfy the *Australian Engineering Competency Standards Stage 1 and Stage 2*. A Washington Accord qualification will satisfy Stage 1 competencies. Stage 2 competencies must be satisfied under Engineers Australia's normal rules and procedures.

6. Describe assessment areas in which assessment may be required, at discretion of registering authority. E.g.

- a. Communication skills

Communication skills are fundamental to the demonstration of competency and are tested in any competency-based assessment. They will be assessed in conjunction with an assessment for the purpose of abbreviating the adaptation period. A lack of communication skill is typically the greatest impediment to foreign engineers entering the workforce in Australia. Our orientation programs address this skill.

b. Is there a language requirement?

Australia's overseas engineering qualification assessment requires an IELTS Test Report with a minimum of IELTS level 6 in all four bands. Passing this assessment is crucial to a positive engineering qualifications assessment for persons intending to make an application for migration to Australia under Australia's General Skilled Migration program.

A level of English language approaching IELTS 7.0 is expected of professional engineers who seek to gain employment or offer professional services as a consultant in Australia, though this is not specifically tested.

7. Describe any benefits that IRPE registrants might receive in addition to (but separate from) registration/licensing benefits. E.g.
- a. Ease of entry to membership of a learned society.

Under current membership regulations, a Washington Accord qualification is the most straightforward entry ticket into membership of Engineers Australia.

Some bilateral mutual recognition agreements provide the benefit an admission fee waiver - obviously annual fees must be paid.

8. Where the jurisdiction is also an APEC member, what differences to the above list apply to APEC Engineers

No distinction is made by Engineers Australia between the APEC Engineer Register and the EMF International Register of Professional Engineers.

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