Skilled Independent Visa (Subclass 189): 2026 Guide

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The Skilled Independent visa (Subclass 189) is one of the most sought-after permanent visas in Australia. It allows skilled workers to live and work permanently in Australia without needing a sponsor or nomination from a state or territory government.

How Does the Subclass 189 Work?

The 189 visa operates through a points-based system:

1. **Check your occupation** is on the relevant Skilled Occupation List
2. **Obtain a positive skills assessment** from the relevant assessing authority
3. **Submit an Expression of Interest (EOI)** through SkillSelect
4. **Receive an invitation** to apply based on your points score
5. **Lodge your visa application** within 60 days of receiving the invitation

The Points Test

You must score at least **65 points** to be eligible, but in practice, competitive scores are much higher. Points are awarded for:

Factor	Points Available
Age (25-32 years)	Up to 30 points
English language ability (Superior)	Up to 20 points
Skilled employment (overseas)	Up to 15 points
Skilled employment (Australian)	Up to 20 points
Educational qualifications	Up to 20 points
Australian study requirement	5 points
Specialist education qualification	5 points
Credentialled community language	5 points
Partner skills	Up to 10 points
Professional year	5 points
State/territory nomination (190 only)	5 points

Current Invitation Rounds

Invitation rounds occur regularly, but the minimum points score for an invitation varies by occupation. In recent rounds:

- **Accountants:** 90-95 points
- **Software Engineers:** 80-85 points
- **Registered Nurses:** 75-80 points
- **Civil Engineers:** 80-85 points

Tip: The higher your points score, the sooner you will receive an invitation. If your score is borderline, consider ways to increase it — such as improving your English test

score or gaining additional work experience.

Skills Assessment

Before submitting your EOI, you must obtain a positive skills assessment from the relevant authority for your occupation. Common assessing authorities include:

- **Engineers Australia** — for engineering occupations
- **ACS** — for ICT occupations
- **CPA/CA/IPA** — for accounting occupations
- **ANMAC** — for nursing occupations
- **VETASSESS** — for various professional occupations

Common Pitfalls

1. **Claiming points you are not entitled to** — the Department will verify every claim
2. **Not meeting the English language requirement** — most occupations require at least Competent English (IELTS 6.0 in each band)
3. **Skills assessment issues** — ensure your qualifications and experience are assessed correctly
4. **Waiting too long to apply** — invitation rounds are competitive and scores can increase
5. **Not disclosing all relevant information** — non-disclosure can result in refusal under PIC 4020

How I Can Help

I can assess your eligibility, help you maximise your points score, guide you through the skills assessment process, and prepare your visa application. The 189 visa is highly competitive — professional guidance can make the difference.

Book a consultation today from $97.

About the Author

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