



Plumbers,
Gasfitters and
Drainlayers Board

Overseas-qualified Guide

Current as at March 2019

Brief overview: overseas-qualified people

1) Read the PGDB *Overseas-qualified Guide*

2) Attain a "Recommendation for Registration" from The Skills Organisation with an Assessment Outcome stating overseas qualification(s) equivalent to the NZ Certificate in P/G/D (Level 4).

3) Print off and complete the PGDB's *Eligibility Application* with required documentation. Depending on your experience and knowledge of the NZ regulatory and compliance framework, you choose to apply for **either** Tradesman or Certifying level.

TRADESMAN level

A Tradesman Plumber/Gasfitter/Drainlayer, who holds a current annual practising licence issued by the Board:

- (a) may **carry out** sanitary plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying
- (b) **must work at all times under the supervision** of a Certifying Plumber/Gasfitter/Drainlayer;
- (c) may physically supervise, as a '**Nominated Person**' sanitary plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying undertaken by a person under supervision; and
- (d) may **test** sanitary plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying (unless it is for the purposes of verifying/certifying compliance).

(NB Tradesman: cannot verify sanitary plumbing/drainlaying, cannot certify gasfitting, and cannot be the supervisor for other people. Only Certifiers can do these things).

OR

CERTIFYING level

A Certifying Plumber/Gasfitter/Drainlayer who holds a current annual practising licence issued by the Board:

- (a) may **carry out** sanitary plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying
- (b) may **supervise** sanitary plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying undertaken by the following people:
 - (i) Tradesman
 - (ii) Journeyman
 - (iii) Provisional Licence holders
 - (iv) Limited Certificate Trainees
 - (v) Exemptions Under Supervision
- (c) may **test** sanitary plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying; and
- (d) must **verify** sanitary plumbing/drainlaying where verification is required; must **certify** gasfitting where certification is required.

4) *Eligibility Application* approved by the PGDB. We send you confirmation in writing, with a Provisional Licence application (**\$90 per trade**). A Provisional Licence allows you to legally carry out work under the supervision of a Certifier for a **maximum** of 12 months while you prepare to sit the next requirement.

5) Within 12 months passes the PGDB theory Tradesman exam(s) (\$350 per exam). Can do this in home country or NZ.

- 6) Can then apply for Tradesman level registration:
- \$375 registration fee per trade +
 - \$90 licence fee per trade +
 - \$285 disciplinary and prosecution levy payable per person.

Once registered at Tradesman level, the requirements to move up to Certifying level are:

- 1) to have held a licence at Tradesman level in the relevant trade for an aggregate period of not less than 24 months **and**
- 2) passed the relevant written Certifying examination(s).

5) Within 12 months passes the Advanced Proficiency Assessment (APA) (maximum cost \$4490 per trade – any unused portion of the assessment fee and materials fee will be refunded). **APA's can only be undertaken in NZ.**

- 6) Can then apply for Certifying level registration:
- \$375 registration fee per trade +
 - \$90 licence fee per trade +
 - \$285 disciplinary and prosecution levy payable per person.

Part 1 – Working in New Zealand	1
Part 2 – Background	2
Part 3 – Requirement to hold an authorisation, and the different types of authorisations	3
Part 4 – Standards for overseas-qualified people	7
Part 5 – Standards for Tradesman level	11
Part 6 – Standards for Certifying level	13
Part 7 – Fees	15
Part 8 – PGDB contact details	15

Part 1 – Working in New Zealand

Eligibility to work in New Zealand

If you are considering coming to work in New Zealand, it is your responsibility to ensure you have the legal right to do so. Immigration New Zealand is the government organisation responsible for making decisions about the right to work and live in New Zealand. All registration applicants are encouraged to contact Immigration New Zealand regarding their eligibility to live and work in New Zealand before starting the application process. For further information, please visit the Immigration New Zealand website:

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas>

Australian licence holders

If you are the holder of an Australian sanitary plumbing, gasfitting, or drainlaying licence you may apply for registration and a practising licence in New Zealand in the equivalent class under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997 (TTMRA). Please refer to the guidance notes and application form for Australian licence holders on the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board's ("the Board") website:

https://www.pgdb.co.nz/trade/tradespeople_coming_to_NZ.html

Qualified in any country other than Australia

If you have obtained a plumbing, gasfitting, or drainlaying qualification in any other country besides Australia, please continue reading to find out more about how to become registered in New Zealand.

Relevant guidance documents

If you intend to work in New Zealand there is a legal and regulatory framework that you will need to understand. Visit <https://www.pgdb.co.nz/legislation-policies/legislation.html> for a list. Please be aware that some resources are free to download and others will have to be purchased.

Part 2 – Background

Restricted work

In New Zealand, sanitary plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying are restricted trades that may only be carried out by authorised people, as set out in the *Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006* (the Act). The Act is part of a building industry legislative framework that also includes, but is not limited to the *Gas Act 1992*, the *Gas (Safety and Measurement) Regulations 2010*, the *Building Act 2004* and the *Building Regulations 1992* which also contains the Building Code. For further information go to: <http://www.pgdb.co.nz/legislation-policies/legislation.html>

Role of the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board

The Board is a statutory body continued under the Act that is responsible for protecting the health and safety of all New Zealanders by regulating people who do sanitary plumbing, gasfitting, and drainlaying. The Board's functions are set out in the Act and focus on registration, licensing, competence, complaints and discipline, and court prosecutions.

While the Board is established by statute and required to carry out work to protect public health and safety, its revenue is received solely from the fees and levies charged to tradespeople.

Registration and licensing

Being *registered* and being *licensed* are different.

A person may be entitled to registration once they have achieved the minimum standards of competence required to carry out sanitary plumbing, gasfitting or drainlaying and have complied with the prescribed registration process.

There are two main classes of registration, and depending on your experience and knowledge of the New Zealand regulatory and compliance framework you will need to consider which level you want to apply for: "**Tradesman**" or "**Certifying**".

Registration on its own is not authorisation for a person to work in the trade. Once a person is registered, they may then apply for an annual practising licence. A licence authorises a person to carry out a restricted trade, and helps the Board regulate the continued competence of a registered person.

When a member of the public engages a registered person who holds a current practising licence, they can have confidence that the person is appropriately qualified and able to carry out work competently, safely and compliantly.

As well as registered and licensed people being able to do sanitary plumbing, gasfitting, and drainlaying, the Act sets out other authorisations that allow people to do this work. The different types of authorisations the Board can issue are discussed further in Part 3.

For more information on the competencies required for each class of registration please see the relevant Gazette notices available on the Board's website:

<http://www.pgdb.co.nz/legislation-policies/legislation.html>

Part 3 – Requirement to hold an authorisation, and the different types of authorisations

Requirement to hold an authorisation to carry out sanitary plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying

Any person carrying out sanitary plumbing, gasfitting, and drainlaying work is required to be appropriately licensed or otherwise authorised. Authorisations and practising licences are valid for a maximum of one year and expire on 31 March. If you wish to continue working in the trade after the expiry of your licence/authorisation on 31 March, you need to ensure you have applied to renew it *before* 31 March. If you do not renew by that date, you are not permitted to continue working until your licence or authorisation has been renewed.

All registered people (i.e. Journeyman, Tradesman, and Certifying) are required to complete the relevant CPD course before they can renew their annual licence. For more information about CPD go to: <http://www.pgdb.co.nz/trade/cpd.html>

Licensing terms and conditions

Licences are subject to terms and conditions as set out in the relevant *Gazette* notices.

View the relevant *Gazette* notice to see what terms and conditions the licence you will be applying for is subject to: <http://www.pgdb.co.nz/legislation-policies/legislation.html>

Quick reference guide

Who can . . .	Certifier	Tradesman	Provisional Licence holder	Journeyman	Limited Certificate Trainee	Exemption Under Supervision
Test?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ NB must also be tested by Certifier or "nominated person"
Install?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Be a supervisor?	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Be a "nominated person" that can perform physical supervision on behalf of the supervisor?	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Verify work for official purposes? (e.g. producer statements)	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Work on live gas? – <i>gasfitting only</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Commission? – <i>gasfitting only</i>	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Issue gas certificates? – <i>gasfitting only</i>	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

NB: this grid is intended as a quick reference guide. For further information, please read the Board's supervision guidelines [www.pgdb.co.nz/trade/licensing], the relevant *Gazette* notice and the PGD Act 2006 [www.pgdb.co.nz/legislation-policies/legislation].

Certifying

The *Certifying* class is the top level registration and licence. *Certifiers* have demonstrated they possess the advanced competencies required to test and certify their own work and be responsible for the work of those they supervise. They are the only ones that can verify work for official purposes (e.g. sign off compliance documents for local councils).

Tradesman

People registered and licensed in the *Tradesman* class have demonstrated they possess the fundamental competencies required to work in their trade. They must work under the supervision of a *Certifier* and under the direction of their *Certifier* may physically supervise, as a “nominated person”, sanitary plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying work undertaken by another currently authorised *Tradesman*, *Provisional licence holder*, *Journeyman*, *Trainee Limited Certificate*, or *Exemption Under Supervision* for the relevant trade.

Once registered at *Tradesman* level, the requirements to move up to *Certifying* level are:

- 1) to have held a licence at *Tradesman* level in the relevant trade for an aggregate period of 24 months **and**
- 2) passed the relevant written 9195/9196/9198 examination(s).

Provisional licence

Provisional licence(s) are issued to overseas-qualified people who have had an *Eligibility Application* approved by the PGDB, and are issued for a maximum of up to 12 months while you wait to sit the Tradesman exams (9192 Tradesman Plumber/9193 Tradesman Gasfitter/9197 Tradesman Drainlayer) or the APA.

A *provisional licence* holder may:

- (a) carry out any sanitary plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying under the supervision of a *Certifying* plumber/gasfitter/drainlayer; and
- (b) test sanitary plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying.

A *provisional licence* holder must work under the supervision of their *Certifier*, or a nominated person when carrying out restricted work. A *provisional licence* holder cannot be a nominated person.

The Registrar may impose any other terms and conditions that he or she thinks fit on a provisional licence.

Journeyman

A registered and licensed *Journeyman* can work under the supervision of their Certifier.

A *Journeyman Gasfitter* is entitled to work on live gas, under the supervision of their Certifier.

A *Journeyman* cannot be a nominated supervisor, nor can they verify, or, in the case of gasfitting, commission or issue gas certificates.

The Journeyman class was created for those who have achieved their trade-related qualification, but for whatever reason have not passed the relevant exam.

Trainee Limited Certificate

A person who holds a *Trainee Limited Certificate* is enrolled with a training provider (Ara, Unitec, or The Skills Organisation) to complete the NZ Certificate in plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying.

During the first 12 months of holding a *Trainee Limited Certificate* and doing sanitary plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying they must work at all times in the presence of their *Certifier*, or the presence of a nominated person.

Exemption Under Supervision

The Act makes provision for people to work under an *Exemption Under Supervision* under sections 19 (sanitary plumbing), 21 (gasfitting) and 25 (drainlaying).

The *Exemption Under Supervision* is applied for by the *Certifying* supervisor.

During the first 24 months of holding an *Exemption Under Supervision* and doing sanitary plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying the exempt person must work at all times in the presence of their *Certifier*, or the presence of a nominated person. The *Certifier* or nominated person must also test the work of the *Exempt* person.

Gasfitting: A person working under an *Exemption Under Supervision* for gasfitting may only do, or assist in doing, gasfitting if no pipe or appliance they work on is connected to any supply of gas.

Part 4 – Standards for overseas-qualified people

Recommendation for Registration by The Skills Organisation

The Skills Organisation is an industry training organisation that sets industry qualifications, unit standards and arranges training across 22 industries in New Zealand.

The Skills Organisation carries out the assessment of overseas qualifications on behalf of the PGDB.

Go to <https://skills.org.nz/skills-recognition/plumbing-recommendation-for-registration/> for further information on the Recommendation for Registration.

Evidence of being a fit and proper person

To be entitled to apply for registration at *Tradesman* or *Certifying* level you must satisfy the Board that you are a fit and proper person to be registered. If the information received raises concerns, the Board may seek further information before reaching a decision about whether you meet the Board's fit and proper person expectations. To view the Board's fit and proper person policy, please visit the Board's website: www.pgdb.co.nz/legislation-policies/policies.

To enable the Board to assess whether you meet the fit and proper registration requirements, you must provide the following documentation, as well as answering the fit and proper person questions in your application:

- evidence of your residency in New Zealand (if older than 12 months must be accompanied by a NZ criminal record), **or**
- criminal records/police certificates that are no older than 6 months from you country of citizenship (unless you can provide satisfactory evidence you have never lived there), **and** from any country you have lived in for 12 months or more (whether in one visit or intermittently) in the last 10 years.

Why does the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board need to check whether I'm a fit and proper person?

Section 36 of the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act sets out who can be registered as a plumber, gasfitter, or drainlayer, and says that people applying to be registered have to satisfy the Board they are a fit and proper person. Everyone applying to be registered has to undergo a fit and proper person check.

What does being a fit and proper person mean?

A "fit and proper person" is someone who is suitable to do a job. There are lots of jobs that have a fit and proper person test, for example, electricians, teachers, bus drivers, and pilots. For the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board, it means someone who is suitable to be registered as a plumber, gasfitter, or drainlayer. When deciding whether a person is fit and proper to be a plumber, gasfitter, or drainlayer, the Board looks at questions about character and health. The fit and proper person test isn't about whether the person has the technical skills to do the job as that is considered separately.

What things about me are looked at as part of the fit and proper person check?

The Board asks about the following matters when considering whether someone is a fit and proper person to be registered:

- criminal history
- history of disciplinary offences for plumbing, gasfitting or drainlaying in any country
- history of unauthorised work in plumbing, gasfitting, or drainlaying in any country
- physical or mental health conditions that might mean someone can't do plumbing, gasfitting, or drainlaying work to the minimum standard
- anything else that is relevant.

Will I fail the check if I disclose a criminal conviction?

Not necessarily. It depends on the conviction and the circumstances. Each case is assessed fairly and reasonably on its own merits.

What would happen if I lied in my registration application?

If you lied in your registration application, you might be committing an offence under the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006, and could be prosecuted in a District Court and liable to a fine of up to \$10,000. The Board might also decide not to register you, or cancel your registration if you got it as a result of deliberate untruthfulness.

What is the actual process for assessing whether I am a fit and proper person?

When you apply to the Board to be registered, you need to complete an application form that includes questions about being a fit and proper person. Depending on your answers, you may have to send the Board copies of things like your criminal record. Once you have completed your application form and have all required information, you send it to the Registrar. It's your job to make sure that all documentation is provided to the Board on time. If the Board has any concerns about whether you are a fit and proper person to be registered, someone contacts you to ask for further information and to give you an opportunity to make any comments.

Once all information and comments are received, or if you do not provide any information or comments, the Board makes a decision on whether you are a fit and proper person. If it decides you are a fit and proper person, it advises you and proceeds with the registration process. If it decides you are not a fit and proper person, it declines your application and advises you of your right of appeal.

Isn't there some law that says I don't have to tell anyone if I have a conviction?

Yes, there is. The Board doesn't ask you to disclose any information you don't have to. The Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004 should be consulted for full information. Please see the Ministry of Justice website (<http://www.justice.govt.nz/>) for further information.

Evidence of work history

The Board requires you to provide evidence of having worked **full time** in the relevant trade for a minimum period.

Registration class	<i>Plumbing and/or gasfitting</i>	<i>Drainlaying</i>
Tradesman	4 years minimum	2 years minimum
Certifying	6 years minimum	4 years minimum

The duration of years specified are comparable to the minimum period a New Zealand qualified applicant would have worked in the trade before qualifying to become registered in the relevant class.

What counts for evidence that you've worked full-time in the relevant trade?

1. Employed:
 - A letter from current or past employer(s) or supervisor(s) which:
 - details the exact type of plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying work that you carried out, and
 - provides exact dates of employment.
 - **NB** Any letters must be on letterhead, dated and signed by the author.
2. Self-employed:
 - **Certified** evidence of:
 - + Invoices/Contracts
 - + Plans
 - + Codes of compliance or sign-off certificates
 - + Quotes
 - + Official forms/documents from work you have carried out
 - + As-built plans/as-laid plans (i.e. as it has been laid)
 - + Consents/permits
 - Testimonials from inspectors:
 - + Detailing the exact type of plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying work that you carried out, and
 - + confirm exact dates of work.
 - + **NB** Any letters must be on letterhead, dated and signed by the author.
 - Photographs of work undertaken
 - Any other documents that may assist the Board in assessing your application.

Part 5 – Standards for Tradesman level

Tradesman class – documentation required for *Eligibility application*

You will need the following:

- 1***
- certified copy** of evidence that you have been granted New Zealand residence (if older than 12 months **must** be accompanied by a current NZ criminal record from the Ministry of Justice).

OR

- original** police certificates that are no older than 6 months from your country of citizenship (unless you can provide satisfactory evidence that you have never lived there), **and** from any country you have lived in for 12 months or more (whether in one visit or intermittently) in the last 10 years.

AND

- 2***
- a **certified copy** of a “Recommendation for Registration” from The Skills Organisation with an outcome stating your qualification is equivalent to, or greater than the NZ Certificate in Plumbing/Gasfitting/Drainlaying at Level 4.

OR

- a **certified copy** of your PGDB Section 52 exemption notice; and
- evidence that you have a **minimum of four years** working full time in the plumbing and/or gasfitting trade (see page 2 for what counts as evidence).
- evidence that you have a **minimum of two years** working full time in the drainlaying trade (see page 2 for what counts as evidence).

Tradesman information continued

When you have met the above criteria you can complete an *Eligibility Application* (available from http://www.pgdb.co.nz/trade/tradespeople_coming_to_NZ.html) and send it to us with the required documentation.

Once we approve your application, you will be notified by letter that you are on the pathway to registration, and provided with an application form to apply for a *provisional licence*. A *provisional licence* enables you to undertake sanitary plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying work for a maximum of 12 months while you complete the Board's electronic 9192/9193/9197 examination(s).

The Board's electronic *Tradesman* examination(s)

The Board's *9192 Tradesman Plumber*, *9193 Tradesman Gasfitter*, and *9197 Tradesman Drainlayer* examinations are three-hour theoretical examinations held in assessment centres throughout New Zealand.

Please see the examination information guide and guidance documents on the Board's website for further information: <http://www.pgdb.co.nz/trade/exams.html>.

It is possible for overseas-qualified applicants who have been approved for *Eligibility* to sit the Board's examinations outside New Zealand. Please see the Board's policy on examinations for further information regarding the conditions for this:

<http://www.pgdb.co.nz/legislation-policies/policies.html>

Once you pass the electronic examination(s), you can apply for registration at Tradesman level.

Note: once you're registered at *Tradesman* level, the requirements to move up to *Certifying* level are:

- 1) to have held a licence at *Tradesman* level in the relevant trade for an aggregate period of 24 months **and**
- 2) passed the relevant written 9195/9196/9198 examination(s).

Part 6 – Standards for Certifying level

Certifying class – documentation required for *Eligibility application*

1*

- a **certified copy** of a “Recommendation for Registration” from The Skills Organisation with an outcome stating your qualification is equivalent to, or greater than the NZ Certificate in Plumbing/Gasfitting/Drainlaying at Level 4.

OR

- a **certified copy** of the PGDB Section 52 exemption notice.

AND

2*

- certified copy** of evidence that you have been granted New Zealand residence (if older than 12 months **must** be accompanied by a current NZ criminal record from the Ministry of Justice)

OR

- original** police certificates that are no older than 6 months from your country of citizenship (unless you can provide satisfactory evidence that you have never lived there), **and** from any country you have lived in for 12 months or more (whether in one visit or intermittently) in the last 10 years;

AND

3*

- evidence that you have a **minimum of six years** working full time in the plumbing and/or gasfitting trade.
- and/or evidence that you have a **minimum of four years** working full time in the drainlaying trade.

Certifying information continued

When you have met the above criteria you can complete an *Eligibility Application* for overseas-qualified persons application form (available from http://www.pgdb.co.nz/trade/tradespeople_coming_to_NZ.html) and send it to us with the required documentation.

Once we approve your application, you will be notified by letter and provided with an application form to apply for a *provisional licence*. A *provisional licence* enables you to undertake sanitary plumbing/gasfitting/drainlaying work for up to 12 months while you complete the Board's Advanced Proficiency Assessment (APA).

The APA for Certifying applicants

The Board's advanced proficiency assessment (APA) is designed to test the practical and theoretical competencies required of someone working in the certifying class through a written and oral test and a series of project based tasks.

Successful applicants demonstrate their ability to use acceptable design, verification, and installation processes, as well as test and commission their work in line with New Zealand law.

The competencies for each trade at *Certifying* level can be found in the relevant Gazette notice: <http://www.pgdb.co.nz/legislation-policies/legislation.html>

The APA takes place over three consecutive 8-hour days:

1.1. Part one (day 1, morning):

Consists of written and oral questions to test the applicant's knowledge of legislative and Building Code compliance requirements in New Zealand and their ability to design plumbing or gasfitting or drainlaying systems that comply with those requirements.

1.2. Part two (day 1, afternoon; days 2 and 3):

The applicant is required to complete several practical tasks and oral questions are asked relating to the tasks being undertaken.

The APA is conducted at a facility either in Auckland or Invercargill (whichever is closest to the applicant) and is carried out over three consecutive 8-hour days.

If an applicant is unsuccessful at completing the APA they will be directed to pursue registration in the *Tradesman* class.

Once you pass the APA, you can apply for registration at Certifying level.

Part 7 – Fees

A full list of fees is available to view here: <http://www.pgdb.co.nz/trade/fees.html>

Part 8 – PGDB contact details

If you have any queries regarding the information in this guide please call 0800 743 262 from within New Zealand or 0064 4 494 2970 from overseas.

Our office hours are Monday to Friday 8am-5pm (NZ time).

Alternatively you can email registration@pgdb.co.nz

www.pgdb.co.nz