

EMPLOYER'S Guide to Apprenticeships and Traineeships



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Employing Apprentices and Trainees in the Australian Apprenticeships System

Australia's national system of training provides high quality, work-based training with qualifications that meet national standards. Under the National Training Framework qualifications obtained under an apprenticeship or traineeship are recognised throughout Australia.

Apprenticeships and traineeships combine employment with quality structured training and are available in almost all industries. Training generally involves a combination of training in the workplace and off-the-job. Apprenticeships and traineeships are all available on a full-time basis and many can be undertaken part-time. You can also engage a school-based apprentice/trainee on a part-time basis while they are still at school.

When you employ an apprentice or trainee you will need to sign a training contract. Under the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1994* a training contract is referred to as a training agreement. A training contract is a legally binding agreement between an employer and an apprentice or trainee to achieve the qualification stated in the contract. Before you sign the training contract check that both you and your potential apprentice or trainee understand your responsibilities.

This booklet will give you basic information about apprenticeships and traineeships and who can help you employ, train and support your apprentice or trainee.



How to Employ an Apprentice or Trainee

Employing an apprentice or trainee is easy if you follow these steps:

- Decide what skills are needed in your business and choose a relevant apprenticeship or traineeship.
- Decide whether you want your apprentice or trainee to work full-time or part-time.
- Recruit an apprentice or trainee.
- Select a Registered Training Organisation to provide training and assessment services.
- Contact an Australian Apprenticeships Centre who will guide you through the sign-up process and assist you to complete the training contract.
- Commence your apprentice or trainee.
- Complete a training plan with your Registered Training Organisation.

When You Employ Apprentices or Trainees

You agree to:

- meet your responsibilities as an employer
- keep them employed for the duration of the training contract
- support their training (this includes providing on-the-job training, supervision from competent people, paid time to attend off-the-job training and mentoring)
- provide a safe working environment
- pay them correctly and adhere to formal conditions of employment.

They agree to:

- work towards the agreed qualification
- participate in all the required training
- meet their responsibilities as employees.



The Purpose of the Training Contract

An apprenticeship or traineeship is confirmed by a legally binding training contract, which is signed by both the employee and employer. The training contract must be sent to Skills Tasmania within 21 days of the commencement date on the training contract. The training contract has to be approved by the Tasmanian Training Agreements Committee (TTAC) before it has any legal effect.

The Training Contract contains:

- training contract obligations of the employer and apprentice or trainee
- contact details of the employer and apprentice or trainee
- the qualification to be obtained
- the duration of the training contract
- the probation period
- details of the Registered Training Organisation which will deliver the training and assessment services
- industrial arrangements under which the apprentice or trainee will be employed
- information for national statistical purposes
- employment arrangements (full-time, part-time or school-based)
- previous qualifications of the apprentice or trainee.

Probation Period

A probation period applies to all training contracts. Make sure that you are aware of what probation period applies when you sign the training contract. The probation period gives you and your apprentice or trainee time to work together and decide whether to continue with the training contract. The probation period may be extended provided application is made before expiry of the probation period.

The training contract may be cancelled by either party during the probation period. You are required to follow normal industrial relations practices if you terminate the employment of an apprentice or trainee.



Changes to the Training Contract

If you want to change your training contract in any way you should apply to the Tasmanian Training Agreements Committee (TTAC) for approval to do so. Changes may include:

- Cancelling the training contract
- Suspending the contract due to sickness or work shortage
- Choosing a different qualification that may be more appropriate to your workplace
- Varying hours of employment
- Extending the training contract
- Changing to a different Registered Training Organisation
- Change of business ownership

You should not terminate your apprentice's or trainee's employment without receiving TTAC approval to cancel or early complete your training contract.

Your Australian apprenticeships Centre will assist you to complete the required application form.

Change of Business Ownership

If you employ apprentices and trainees and you sell the business or any part of the business, any training contract which forms part of the business sold is transferred to the purchaser.

This means that the training contract that you have signed with your apprentice or trainee under Section 37 (2) of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1994* must be transferred as part of the sale of the business.

Your Australian Apprenticeships Centre will assist you to complete the required application forms. If you have any problems contact a Training Consultant at Skills Tasmania on 1 800 655 846.



Training Arrangements

Choosing a Registered Training Organisation

By the time you sign a training contract you and your apprentice or trainee should have chosen a Registered Training Organisation who will work with you throughout the apprenticeship or traineeship. There is usually more than one Registered Training Organisation registered to deliver the training that your apprentice or trainee will need.

Registered Training Organisations are required to meet stringent standards under the Australian Quality Training Framework before they are able to provide training for apprentices and trainees.

Your Australian Apprenticeships Centre can help you by providing a list of training organisations registered to deliver the training and assessment services you need. If you'd like to do your own research, the training.com.au website has a list of Registered Training Organisations and the training they are registered to deliver.

The Registered Training Organisation that you choose will work with you and your apprentice or trainee to develop a training plan, assess your apprentice's or trainee's achievement of skills and issue a qualification when the qualification is successfully completed. Registered Training Organisations will try to be flexible to meet any special needs for your situation.

The training your apprentice or trainee will undertake

Your apprentice or trainee will be enrolled in a training program leading to a nationally recognised qualification.

You should be aware of the nominal duration of the training contract which is the timeframe in which the qualification can normally be achieved.



There is often a range of qualifications suitable to meet the needs of your business and your apprentice or trainee. Your apprentice or trainee may also be able to progress to higher levels under apprenticeship or traineeship arrangements.

Discuss with your Registered Training Organisation:

- the skills you need your apprentice or trainee to learn
- training methods that will suit your workplace and your apprentice or trainee
- what training will need to be delivered in your workplace as part of your apprentice's or trainee's work
- what training will need to be delivered off-the-job
- what learning assistance is available for your apprentice or trainee (e.g. help with maths, reading or writing)
- who will assess the apprentice or trainee and when the assessment will take place
- arrangements for feedback or progress reports about your apprentice's or trainee's training.

Training Plan

Your Registered Training Organisation is required to contact you within two months of commencement of the training contract to work with you and your apprentice or trainee to develop a detailed training plan. The plan should include:

- what qualification your apprentice or trainee is working to achieve
- what training your apprentice or trainee needs to undertake
- who will deliver the training
- what training will be undertaken in the workplace
- what training will take place off-the-job
- when and how the training will be assessed and monitored.



School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

A school-based apprenticeship or traineeship allows year 10, 11 and 12 students to undertake a vocational education and training (VET) qualification as an apprentice or trainee while still attending senior secondary education. The school-based apprentice or trainee will attend school, studying towards the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE), at the same time as undertaking a nationally recognised qualification while in paid employment.

Responsibilities

The Employer ensures the school based apprentice/trainee undertakes:

- Between 8 -15 hours of paid employment per week in term time
- Between 720 - 900 hours of paid employment per year, i.e. extra hours are worked in the school holidays
- Hours of work are negotiated between the employer and apprentice/trainee

The School ensures:

- 600 – 800 hours of TCE study at school or college each year in year 11 or 12
- Normally 3 or 4 TCE subjects per year are undertaken in year 11 or 12
- Timetables are negotiated between the student and the college.

For year 10 students, the school will organise their timetable on an individual basis. Students should be enrolled in core subjects and only some electives, not all.

The Registered Training Organisation (RTO) ensures the school-based apprentice/trainee undertakes:

- A training program leading into a nationally recognised qualification.
- A training plan that is negotiated with the apprentice/trainee, RTO and employer. The training plan specifies training to be undertaken in the workplace and off-the-job and clarifies the training expectations of each party.
- A report is prepared in July for the school and parent on the progress of the school-based apprenticeship/traineeship.



A School-Based Apprentice or Trainee must:

- Attend all school or college classes, if not, then in breach of the Training Contract.
- Inform the employer, school or RTO if ill or unable to attend.
- Attend off-the- job training as organised.
- Discuss any difficulties (work, training or school) with the School-Based Apprenticeship/Traineeship contact person in the school/college so matters can be resolved quickly.
- Commit to making the best of both opportunities – work and school.
- Year 10 students undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship will sign a training contract that commits them to at least year 11.

Employers should contact an Australian Apprenticeships Centre (AAC) to sign-up a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

If the duration of the training contract continues past the student's completion of school, the training contract will be converted into either a full-time or part-time training contract.



Fully Competency Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

When you and your apprentice/trainee enter into an apprenticeship or traineeship, the contract will require you to say how long it should take your apprentice or trainee to complete the qualification. This is referred to as the “nominal duration” and it is only an indication of the length of the contract: the apprentice or trainee may either finish earlier than this time or it may take longer. The length of the contract will differ from person to person based on previous experience, previous training and how quickly they learn the skills needed for the apprenticeship or traineeship.

Your Registered Training Organisation will work closely with you and your apprentice/trainee at the beginning of the apprenticeship or traineeship to develop a comprehensive training plan. The training plan will clearly map out the training and assessment that you will need to undertake to achieve the qualification. It is very important that this training plan is reviewed and updated on a regular basis during the contract period and that you and your apprentice/trainee are aware of when and how they will be trained and assessed and if this will take place on-the-job or off-the-job.

If your apprentice/trainee is assessed as competent by your Registered Training Organisation and either you or your apprentice/trainee don't believe they are competent to do this work, it is very important that you and your apprentice/trainee talk to your assessor and discuss why you don't feel your apprentice/trainee has the skills yet. Your assessor can then go through the assessment decision with you and your apprentice/trainee and see if there are any skills gaps against the unit of competency and, if so, organise some more training.

Near the end of the apprenticeship/traineeship your Registered Training Organisation will advise you and your apprentice/trainee that the final assessment is due. Once the final assessment has been completed and your apprentice/trainee is deemed competent, your apprentice/trainee will be eligible to receive their full qualification from the Registered Training Organisation. Your Registered Training Organisation will notify Skills Tasmania of their completion date which will automatically complete the apprenticeship or traineeship.



For further details regarding this policy please visit the Skills Tasmania website at: www.skills.tas.gov.au/systemtas/ttacommittee/ and look for the policy titled: 'Policy 29 – Fully Competency Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships'.

The example below illustrates a successful training partnership between the employer, the apprentice/trainee and the assessor from the Registered Training Organisation:

Example:

Registered Training Organisation 'The Flexible Training Company' sends an assessor called Joan to employer 'Blueberry Café'. The manager of Blueberry Cafe, Steve, is the nominated supervisor for all apprentices and trainees in his workplace and will be the responsible person to attest to the competence of apprentices and trainees.

Joan the assessor organises each assessment date with Steve making sure that the date and time suit the business's schedule. At times these appointments need to be moved to take into account staff absences or workload issues in the café.

Steve is always involved in the assessment and makes sure that he is available to discuss any training issues with Joan so that Joan can take this into account when she is assessing apprentices and trainees, and if need be provide some options regarding further training.

On one occasion when Joan came to assess, she worked with both the apprentice and Steve to assess one of the units and all the evidence appeared to be in order, however when she talked to Steve, he didn't agree and thought that the apprentice required more training and was a little weak in a couple of the areas. Joan took this on board, reviewed her evidence and they agreed that the apprentice needed some further training before the apprentice was competent. The apprentice also felt that he needed some more exposure to that skill in the workplace.

When the apprentice/trainee is assessed as competent, both Steve and Joan are sure that this is to the standard required by the qualification and is supported by clear evidence in the workplace.

When Joan organises the final assessment with the workplace for any of the apprentices and trainees, Steve is very clear from previous discussions that this will mean that the apprentice or trainee will complete their structured training and their training contract.



Financial Arrangements

Funding your Apprentice's or Trainee's Training

In many cases, the Tasmanian Government, through Skills Tasmania, funds the training your apprentice or trainee will undertake. Priorities for State funding are set each year, according to the identified need for skills in the State. Skills Tasmania usually provides funds only for training new employees in your business. Payment for training goes directly to the Registered Training Organisation named in your training contract.

You can take on an apprentice or trainee in a qualification that is not funded by the State Government, but you will need to make arrangements to pay for training. Many employers use Australian Government employer incentives for this purpose.

Your Registered Training Organisation should advise you of any fees or charges that will apply to you or your apprentice or trainee.

Before you sign a training contract you should be clear on what financial arrangements apply to the apprenticeship or traineeship.

Wages of your apprentice or trainee

The wages payable to apprentices and trainees are often lower than a full wage rate in recognition of the time the apprentice or trainee spends in structured training both on and off-the-job.

The employment conditions of existing full-time or part-time workers who undertake training under a training contract should be unchanged.

You can obtain information on employment conditions and rates of pay for industrial awards by contacting Fair Work Ombudsman on 13 13 94 or by visiting their website at www.fairwork.gov.au. You will need to provide them with details of the apprenticeship or traineeship being undertaken such as the qualification and nominal duration.

It is your responsibility as the employer to ensure your apprentice or trainee is paid according to the appropriate industrial arrangement.



Financial incentives that might flow to you, as an employer, when employing an apprentice or trainee

If your apprentice or trainee meets eligibility requirements, you may be eligible to receive employer incentives from the Australian Government Department of Education , Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

Sometimes there are additional, special purpose subsidies available to you as an employer. You should ask your Australian Apprenticeships Centre about these.

Conditions under which financial incentives apply vary considerably. It is essential that you clarify those that apply to each individual apprenticeship and traineeship.



Support for Employers, Apprentices and Trainees during the Training Contract

Your first point of contact for most problems is your Australian Apprenticeships Centre. They may either help you or refer you to the appropriate authority.

You can also contact Skills Tasmania on 1800 655 846, for information and advice or to arrange assistance from a Training Consultant. Training Consultants are located in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie.

Who to contact about:

Training

If you have problems regarding training you should first contact your Registered Training Organisation. If you still have concerns contact Skills Tasmania on 1800 655 846.

Problems with your apprentice's or trainee's work performance

Contact Skills Tasmania on 1800 655 846 or your Australian Apprenticeships Centre.

A dispute with your apprentice or trainee

If you need any assistance to resolve a dispute with your apprentice or trainee contact a Skills Tasmania Training Consultant on 1800 655 846. You will be referred to a Training Consultant in your area.

Changes to your training contract

For advice on any issues regarding your training contract contact your Australian Apprenticeships Centre first.

If you want to change your training contract in any way you should apply to the Tasmanian Training Agreements Committee (TTAC) for approval to do so. Your Australian Apprenticeships Centre will assist you to complete the required application forms to submit to TTAC. You should not terminate your apprentice's or trainee's employment without receiving TTAC approval to cancel your training contract.

If you have any problems contact a Training Consultant at Skills Tasmania on 1800 655 846.



Wages

You can obtain information on employment conditions and rates of pay for industrial awards by phoning Fair Work Ombudsman on 13 13 94 or by visiting their website at www.fairwork.gov.au. You will need to provide them with details of the apprenticeship or traineeship being undertaken such as the qualification and nominal duration.

Australian Government incentive payments

Contact your Australian Apprenticeships Centre.



Who does what in the Australian Apprenticeships System?

The Tasmanian Training Agreements Committee (TTAC)

TTAC is a committee of the Skills Tasmania Board, set up under the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1994* to manage training contracts between employers and apprentices or trainees.

TTAC has the power to:

- Approve, amend, transfer, suspend or cancel training contracts (also referred to as training agreements) in accordance with the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1994*.
- Resolve disputes that may arise between employers and apprentices or trainees. Serious disputes may need to be resolved by a formally established TTAC Hearing Panel.

No changes can be made to a training contract without the approval of TTAC.

Skills Tasmania

Skills Tasmania is the government agency responsible for the administration of your training contract. Skills Tasmania supports the Tasmanian Training Agreements Committee.

Skills Tasmania:

- Administers training contracts in accordance with the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1994* and TTAC guidelines and policies.
- Provides notification of approval (or non-approval) of your training contract to you, your apprentice or trainee and your registered training organisation.
- Approves any funding that may be available to meet the cost of training.
- Pays travel and accommodation allowances to eligible apprentices and trainees as a contribution to the cost of attending off-the-job training.



Australian Apprenticeships Centres

Australian Apprenticeships Centres are contracted by the Australian Government to:

- provide general information on apprenticeships and traineeships
- market apprenticeships and traineeships
- assist in completing and lodging training contracts
- process applications and claims for Australian Government incentives and allowances
- provide support to employers and apprentices and trainees to encourage successful completion of the training contract.

Your Australian Apprenticeships Centre will forward your completed training contract to Skills Tasmania on your behalf.

Registered Training Organisations

Registered Training Organisations are responsible for training delivery and assessment of the qualification named in the training contract and for issuing the qualification. Registered Training Organisations are required to meet nationally agreed standards and conditions.



Who does what in the Australian Apprenticeships System?

Group Training Organisations

Group training is an employment and training arrangement whereby an organisation employs apprentices and trainees under a training contract and places them with host employers. The organisation undertakes the employer responsibilities for the quality and continuity of the apprentices' and trainees' employment and training. The organisation also manages the additional care and support necessary to achieve the successful completion of the training contract.

Goals of group training:

- create additional apprenticeship and traineeship employment opportunities that otherwise might not have existed;
- provide for continuity of employment of apprentices and trainees through to the completion of their apprenticeship/traineeship training contract; and
- improve the quality and breadth of training available to apprentices and trainees, particularly in small and medium sized businesses.

Key features of group training:

To achieve these goals, providers of group training services:

- employ apprentices and trainees and place them with host employers;
- are responsible for meeting the obligations of the employer as outlined in the apprenticeship/traineeship training contract and managing and monitoring arrangements with host employers; and
- provide for care and support throughout the apprenticeship or traineeship.

Many providers of group training services also:

- assist apprentices and trainees to make a successful transition into the skilled workforce following completion of their training contract;
- rotate apprentices and trainees across host employers to ensure continuity of the training contract and enhance the quality and breadth of the training experience;
- provide opportunities for those disadvantaged in the labour market to access apprenticeships and traineeships; and
- provide services to the community which contribute to the promotion of VET and encourage employment growth.



Definition of group training organisation

Group Training Organisation (GTO) means an organisation which employs apprentices and trainees under a training contract and places them with host employers.

Definition of host employer

Host Employer means an organisation that hosts, under a written agreement, an apprentice or trainee employed by a group training organisation.

More detailed information on group training organisations operating in Tasmania can be found at www.skills.tas.gov.au/providers/gtos.

Important Contacts

You might have contact with only one or two people in the course of the apprenticeship or traineeship. The system has deliberately been streamlined for you in this way.

However, you should be aware of who to contact. Your Australian Apprenticeships Centre should be able to give you contact details for each of these.

Australian Apprenticeships Centre

Your Australian Apprenticeships Centre will forward the completed training contract to Skills Tasmania on your behalf. Your Australian Apprenticeships Centre will also process your application for Australian Government incentives.

Name of Australian Apprenticeships Centre:

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Contact Name:

Contact Phone Number:

Registered Training Organisation

This is the organisation that you and your apprentice or trainee have selected to be responsible for training and assessment.

Name of Registered Training Organisation:

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Contact Name:

Contact Phone Number:



Tasmania

Explore the possibilities