

## Training for apprentices and trainees

*The key principle of apprenticeships and traineeships is that of learning and developing skills through a combination of hands-on experience and formal training.*

*The primary responsibility for providing apprentices and trainees with relevant instruction and practical experience rests with the employer.*

*This is supplemented by formal training delivered by a registered training organisation (RTO). Apprentices and trainees who successfully complete their formal training will receive a nationally recognised qualification from their training organisation.*

### 4.1 On-the-job training and supervision

#### 4.1.1 Employer responsibilities for on-the-job training

The employer is responsible for ensuring that the apprentice/trainee receives the instruction, practice and support they need to develop skills in all aspects of their vocation, in accordance with the requirements of the training plan.

The registered training organisation should provide the apprentice/trainee with a competency record book or work evidence guide outlining the competencies they are expected to develop within the term of the training contract. The RTO may require the employer to complete or sign entries in the competency record book.

In meeting their obligations to train an apprentice or trainee, employers must ensure that:

- the apprentice or trainee has access to the full range of work required to develop competencies in all aspects of the vocation
- the apprentice or trainee has access to the full range of tools and equipment commonly used by skilled workers in that industry
- the apprentice or trainee will be instructed and supervised by a suitably-qualified or experienced person

#### 4.1.2 Workplace training difficulties

If circumstances change and the employer's capacity to provide his/her apprentice or trainee with the necessary on-the-job training is affected, the employer must notify State Training Services (ph 13 28 11) within 14 days. Options that may be available in these circumstances include transferring the apprentice or trainee to another employer or temporarily suspending the apprenticeship/traineeship.

Where problems relating to training in the workplace cannot be resolved by the parties, the employer or his/her apprentice or trainee should immediately contact State Training Services (ph 13 28 11) for assistance.

## 4.2 Formal training

### 4.2.1 Vocational training orders

The training requirements for each vocation are set out in a vocational training order (VTO). VTOs are developed in consultation with employer groups, unions and industry, and include information about:

- the appropriate term of the apprenticeship or traineeship and the probationary period for that vocation
- the title and level of the qualification the apprentice or trainee must undertake and complete as part of the apprenticeship or traineeship
- other requirements relating to the training of apprentices and trainees in that vocation.

Copies of VTOs (grouped by industry) are available as attachments to Commissioner's Information Bulletins on NSW DET's website at: <http://apprenticeship.det.nsw.edu.au>

### 4.2.2 Delivery of training by registered training organisations

Formal training for apprentices and trainees is delivered by public and private registered training organisations (RTOs). In NSW, the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) is the registering body. To become registered, a registered training organisation has to meet national standards. The nationally recognised qualifications a registered training organisation can issue are defined in its scope of registration. Contact VETAB (ph 9244 5335 or [www.vetab.nsw.gov.au](http://www.vetab.nsw.gov.au)) for more information.

Registered training organisations deliver vocational education and training and/or assessment services. They include TAFE colleges, private and community training organisations, schools, higher education institutions and some large employers.

The formal training registered training organisations provide for most apprentices and new entrant trainees is paid for by the NSW Government through State Training Services. Employers must pay for the recognition, training and assessment services delivered by registered training organisations to existing worker trainees.

#### Fees

The registered training organisation will charge a fee for the apprentice or trainee at enrolment and at the beginning of each additional year of training. Participants in pre-apprenticeship or pre-traineeship training will also be charged an enrolment fee. The fees are currently set in line with fees being charged by NSW TAFE <http://www.tafensw.edu.au/about/money.htm>. The fee is to be paid by either the learner or the employer. Some industrial awards state that the employer is responsible for the payment of fees.

The training organisation may require a contribution from employers and/or industry for training delivery to an apprentice or trainee, but not for pre-apprenticeship and pre-traineeship training nor school based apprenticeships and traineeships.

School based apprentices, school based trainees and their employers do not pay any fees or charges to the RTO in relation to any aspect of the delivery of the training. This includes any fees or charges for administration or learning resource materials such as textbooks, workbooks, safety equipment or other equipment such as tools and uniforms required for the training.

Apprentices or trainees may be eligible for exemption from payment of the enrolment fee. A list of people for whom this applies is available from TAFE NSW <http://www.tafensw.edu.au/about/money.htm>. Similarly students may be eligible for a

refund of fees under certain circumstances.

#### **4.2.3 Competency-based training**

Formal training for apprenticeships and traineeships in NSW is 'competency-based'. This means that apprentices and trainees are assessed on the skills they can demonstrate, the tasks they can perform and the underpinning knowledge they have gained that allows them to effectively perform their work. Employers can progress their apprentice or trainee through the apprenticeship or traineeship as they reach milestones in their competence. Employers, apprentices and trainees can finalise and complete their apprenticeships and traineeships when the formal qualification has been issued by the registered training organisation and the employer considers the apprentice or trainee competent to industry standards. Applications for competency-based completion should be made to your State Training Services centre.

#### **4.2.4 Flexible training arrangements**

The training programs apprentices and trainees undertake through a registered training organisation are now more flexible. Training can often be customised to meet the needs of the employer and their apprentice or trainee.

Although apprentices and trainees are often required to attend classes off the job, sometimes formal training may be delivered in the workplace or by means of a self-paced learning program. The registered training organisation may also use a combination of training styles (often called mixed-mode delivery).

*Following approval of the training contract by State Training Services and receipt of the approval letter by the employer, the RTO is required to develop a full training plan in consultation with the employer and the apprentice or trainee.*

*The full training plan must be prepared within the following timeframes:*

- within 6 weeks of the apprentice/trainee commencing training with the RTO if the term of the training arrangement is less than 12 months;*
- within 12 weeks of the apprentice/trainee commencing training with the RTO if the term of the training arrangement is 12 months or longer.*

*The full training plan must be signed by the employer, the apprentice/trainee and a representative from the RTO. Copies must be kept by all parties and should be updated where necessary during the training contract.*

*If the nominated RTO has not contacted the employer within 6 or 12 weeks of commencement (depending on the term of the training contract) to confirm a start date for the apprentice's or trainee's formal training, contact your local State Training Centre on 132811.*

#### **4.2.5 Preparation of a training plan**

The registered training organisation must prepare a summary training plan for all apprenticeships and traineeships (apart from school-based apprenticeships and traineeships). The summary training plan and the training contract are lodged together with State Training Services by the Australian Apprenticeships Centre. When the training contract is being assessed, the summary training plan is checked to ensure that it meets the requirements of the VTO.

When preparing the full training plan, the registered training organisation must consider whether the apprentice/trainee should be assessed for recognition of prior learning (RPL) and recognition of current competencies (RCC).

For school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, the registered training organisation must develop a full training plan in consultation with the employer, apprentice or trainee and school. The full training plan is submitted with the training contract and any other required information such as risk assessment forms.

#### **4.2.6 Recognition of prior learning and current competencies**

Apprentices or trainees who can show that they already have relevant knowledge or skills (which they have obtained through previous study or work) can apply to have their knowledge and skills formally recognised by the registered training organisation at the commencement of their training program. This is known as recognition of current competencies (RCC) or recognition of prior learning (RPL). The registered training organisation should then assess those competencies at the commencement of the training program to determine if they are relevant and if they can be formally recognised.

An apprentice/trainee assessed by a registered training organisation as having relevant competencies at the outset of the training program should not be required to repeat that part of the training. This should be reflected in the full training plan that the registered training organisation develops for that apprentice/trainee.

However, the registered training organisation has to gather evidence to support its

assessment of the apprentice's/trainee's competence, so the apprentice/trainee must be able to demonstrate that they have the relevant knowledge or skills.

Any RCC or RPL determined by a registered training organisation can reduce the time the apprentice/trainee spends undertaking formal training, but it does not automatically affect the term of the training contract.

If an apprentice or trainee wants the term of their apprenticeship or traineeship to be reduced because the registered training organisation has granted them RPL/RCC, they should seek their employer's support for a variation of the training contract and then apply in writing to State Training Services, through their local office. The employer's nominated Australian Apprenticeships Centre can assist in this process.

For more information about training contract variations, please refer to Section 9.

#### **4.2.7 Using the training plan to monitor progress**

The full training plan should specify:

- the title and level of the qualification
- the units of competence that the apprentice/trainee must complete to attain the qualification
- the learning resources that will be provided to the apprentice or trainee
- any records that the employer should keep about on-the-job training provided to the apprentice or trainee
- any additional support that the apprentice/trainee may require if there are identified barriers to learning
- the dates on which the registered training organisation plans to monitor and/or assess the apprentice's/trainee's progress
- the arrangements the registered training organisation will use to report back to the employer and apprentice/trainee on progress with the training.

The training plan can be used as a tool to monitor the apprentice's/trainee's progress during the course of the training contract. The employer should contact the registered training organisation regularly to ensure that the apprentice/ trainee is attending off-the-job training, completing assignments or assessment tasks, and is making satisfactory progress.

The employer and apprentice/trainee must contact the registered training organisation if they wish to discuss any concerns they have about the formal training. Any problems they have with the registered training organisation should be reported to State Training Services (ph 13 28 11).

#### **4.2.8 Successful completion of formal training**

When the registered training organisation has gathered sufficient evidence of competence in all required competency units, it will issue the apprentice or trainee with the appropriate qualification. All qualifications issued to apprentices and trainees are nationally recognised under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). For more information regarding completion requirements see Section 10.

***Note: Successful completion of the formal training and attainment of a qualification from the RTO does not mean that the training contract has been completed.***

***Employers, apprentices and trainees may apply to the State Training Services for completion of the training contract prior to the expected completion date (as indicated on the approval letter) if the RTO has issued the formal qualification and the employer considers the apprentice / trainee competent to industry standard.***