



Education & Communities

Supervising your apprentice or trainee



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Introduction

Well trained and effective employees are more important than ever for business success. Having a team with the right skills allows businesses to meet the challenges of competition, growth and innovation. Whether the organisation decides to extend the skills of existing staff or to recruit new employees, the business will benefit from apprenticeship and traineeship programs.

Effective recruitment and ongoing support of apprentices and trainees, through to the successful completion of their training, ensures a pool of skilled workers is available to meet the business challenges of the future.

Workplace supervisors play a central role in the success of apprenticeships and traineeships. Recent studies show that the main reasons given by learners in their decision to leave or stay with training arrangements are to do with:

- the extent to which their choice of apprenticeship or traineeship meets their expectations
- the extent to which the quality of the training received compensates for lower training wages
- general workplace conditions and effective workplace relationships
- the extent to which they feel supported as learners in the workplace

By helping apprentices and trainees with these issues in their workplace, employers and workplace supervisors are in a key position to maximise the success of training and provide skilled employees to mentor the next generation of workers.

Effective supervision of apprentices and trainees will also lead to:

- more productive workplaces
- higher quality products and services
- more employees who can work and perform unsupervised
- employees who can undertake a wider range of tasks.

This guide is designed to help employers and workplace supervisors of apprentices and trainees better understand their role and the role of others. It contains information that will help workplace supervisors work more effectively and productively with apprentices and trainees, and provides information on sources of further assistance should it be required.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

This guide has been written specifically for you, the workplace supervisor of apprentices and trainees. Apprenticeships and traineeships are jobs that combine on-the-job training and formal training and assessment. Upon successful completion, the apprentice or trainee is issued a nationally recognised qualification by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). A Certificate of Proficiency is issued by the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) on successful completion of the apprenticeship or traineeship arrangement.

In NSW the employer and the apprentice or trainee enter into a formal Training Contract that sets out the rights, responsibilities and obligations of both parties for the period of the contract. The contract is then registered with State Training Services (STS) (see Appendix: Roles and Responsibilities).

Training Contracts are required to establish:

- **Apprenticeships** - for new and existing employees
- **New Entrant Traineeships** - for employees of any age with less than three months full-time service with the current employer or twelve months part-time service
- **Existing Worker Traineeships** - for employees of any age with more than three months full-time service with the current employer or twelve months part-time service

There is also an option for students to undertake apprenticeships and traineeships while at school.

RTOs, have the crucial role in providing the formal training to your apprentice or trainee. There are over 900 RTOs in NSW, including TAFE and many private sector organisations.

In all apprenticeships and traineeships the employer can choose whether formal training is undertaken in the workplace, in the classroom, or a combination of both.

Whichever formal training pathway is chosen, the employer must release the apprentice or trainee during paid work time to undertake their formal training and assessment. The Training Plan documents this employer obligation.

Training wages for new entrant trainees and apprentices have been designed to account for the time the apprentice or trainee spends undertaking training and assessment. However, you may pay your apprentice or trainee above the training wage or award wage as you would with any other employee. Existing worker trainees retain the wages and employment conditions they had prior to commencing the traineeship.

While apprenticeship and traineeship Training Contracts have a nominal duration assigned at their commencement, the date of completion is flexible. Competency based completion (CBC) can occur when the employer and the apprentice or trainee agree that they are competent, and the RTO has issued the national qualification.

For more detailed information on apprenticeships and traineeships see the Appendix at the end of this booklet or go to the STS website www.training.nsw.gov.au

The Workplace Supervisor

This part of the guide looks at how you can optimise the learning opportunities of your apprentice or trainee through the use of good supervision, coaching skills and on-the-job training.

Workplace induction and ongoing support of the apprentice or trainee is normally the job of the workplace supervisor. The supervisor may also be the employer of the apprentice or trainee, especially in a smaller organisation. As the workplace supervisor you are responsible for on-the-job training for your apprentice or trainee. You are responsible to answer any questions the apprentice or trainee may have regarding their training or other aspects of their work. It is your responsibility to inform the apprentice or trainee of workplace expectations, safety procedures, codes of conduct, lunch breaks, OH&S information, etc. Supervisors also ensure the apprentice or trainee is not harassed or bullied in the workplace.

We all have our own way of doing things – you should make allowances for someone to carry out their assigned task in their own way provided that the job is completed to the required standard.

The supervisor's role

As a supervisor you will act as a role model and workplace coach. The apprentice or trainee will look to you for guidance and help in learning how to do their job. You will need to organise and record both on-the-job and formal training activities undertaken in the workplace, as well as provide assessment evidence to the RTO assessor, if required.

You will also assist the apprentice or trainee in gaining access to equipment and training as needed or outlined in the Training Plan. Individual learning styles vary between individuals and between workplaces — for instance some individuals learn best from written instructions while others prefer practical demonstration. Some organisations provide opportunities for learning in a simulated work environment while others train on the shop floor. Training, whether delivered by the RTO or by you, will be easier and more effective if the apprentice or trainee's preference for a particular learning style can be recognised and accommodated.

An effective workplace supervisor:

- provides a safe and supportive workplace
- integrates learning tasks into work activities based on the Training Plan
- manages safety and production risks while training
- acts as a role model
- meets with the RTO regularly to ensure effective training delivery and assessment practices and to review progress through the Training Plan
- manages the apprentice or trainee's training needs and motivation
- helps the apprentice or trainee develop problem solving and general employability skills
- provides regular feedback and encouragement
- promotes independence and self-direction in learning
- maintains records of progress.

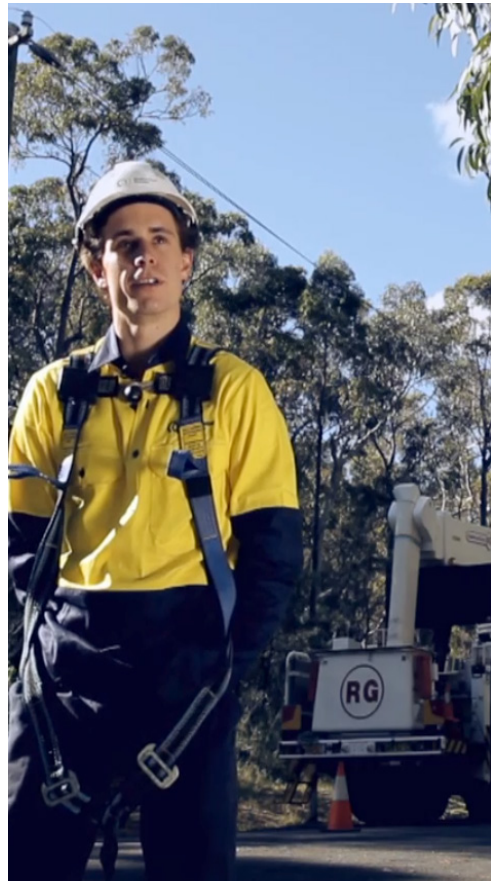
Information on the more detailed aspects of apprenticeships and traineeships can be found in the Appendix.

What are the benefits of being a workplace supervisor?

As a supervisor you will:

- have the satisfaction of passing on your skills and knowledge
- enjoy seeing the apprentice or trainee develop their skills
- apply and develop your skills as a mentor and workplace coach
- improve your skills in communication as you explain work and ask and answer questions
- develop staff who are able to complete delegated tasks, enabling you to complete other work
- gain the opportunity to assist the apprentice or trainee in building work relationships and understanding how the business operates

Foster a positive attitude – mistakes should be looked upon as positive occurrences because they present an opportunity for learning.



What does a workplace supervisor do?

Different supervisors will do different things, depending on the workplace and the kind of training being undertaken. For example, with employment-based or distance apprenticeships and traineeships the workplace supervisor will participate in delivering structured training to the learner with the help of the RTO. In more traditional apprenticeships the structured training is delivered in the RTO's classroom and the supervisor is more involved with coaching the learner in understanding how the classroom instruction translates to the workplace.

People learn best when they are relaxed – when providing on-the-job training ensure your feedback is positive and constructive.

Some of the things you will do are shown below:

The workplace supervisor

Explain your role to the apprentice or trainee

Familiarise the apprentice or trainee with the workplace

Liaise with the RTO about training

Discuss the Training Plan with the apprentice or trainee

Give clear instructions on work tasks

Provide on-the-job training and coaching to complete tasks

Monitor progress towards completion

Provide encouragement and feedback

Keep records

Once the apprenticeship or traineeship is underway, you can also focus on checking progress through regular meetings with the apprentice or trainee to ensure the Training Plan is being followed and that the training record book, if issued, is signed off. Remember that feedback is important as it allows the apprentice or trainee to measure their progress, be encouraged and gain confidence.

You can't listen with your mouth open – always encourage your apprentice or trainee to hear the full message before responding, and take care that you set a good example by doing the same.

Is it my concern what my apprentice or trainee does outside of working hours?

One aspect of supervision to think about is whether you can assist your apprentice or trainee with constructive advice and guidance on some non-work issues which, if left unchecked, could affect their employment and training. For example the need to have adequate sleep and to avoid alcohol and drugs, so that the apprentice or trainee can arrive at work clear headed and energetic, may need to be discussed. Another significant issue for apprentices or trainees is responsible road behaviour. It's a sad fact that the serious road accident rate for drivers aged 17 to 24 years is more than double that of other drivers, with alcohol and speed being major contributing factors. Encouraging good driving habits in your apprentices and trainees will not only help them to avoid serious financial penalties and the possibility of serious or fatal injury but also help them to retain their licence and vehicle which may be essential to their continuing employment.

Introduction to the workplace

A good introduction to the workplace is crucial in providing a basis from which an apprentice or trainee can build effective workplace relationships. A structured induction will leave the new apprentice or trainee with a clear understanding of what is expected of them and what they can expect of others. Most importantly, an effective induction will affirm their decision to join your organisation, convey a sense of your organisation's culture, reduce the time for them to reach full proficiency, reduce staff turnover and provide you with a better understanding of their strengths and career aspirations.

You should ensure that you cover these points in the induction:

- ✓ A description of the business, its goals and strategies, and how the apprentice or trainee fits into the overall picture
- ✓ Terms of employment including the Training Contract, the probationary period, and their conditions of employment including award coverage or their employment contract
- ✓ A review of the Training Plan issued by the RTO to clarify the competencies to be achieved
- ✓ Important work rules and work conditions
- ✓ Method and frequency of wage payment
- ✓ A tour of the workplace and facilities
- ✓ An introduction to key personnel and immediate work colleagues
- ✓ Grievance procedures including who to contact and what to do
- ✓ Leave provisions including annual, sick and other leave
- ✓ Information on the organisation's policies and procedures
- ✓ Occupational Health and Safety training and procedures.

If, in your organisation, a generic induction is provided by someone outside of your own work unit you should ensure that the items in the list on page 6 that relate to training are covered, particularly discussion of the Training Plan and the Training Contract.

First impressions count – the new apprentice or trainee's views of the organisation are strongly influenced by first impressions. Maintaining a positive view is easier than altering a negative one, so make sure your induction is well planned and seamless.

What does being a workplace coach mean?

In your role as a supervisor you will undoubtedly be providing on-the-job training and coaching to others. Coaching includes training activities such as teaching and demonstrating how to do tasks, but it is also a broader term that includes motivating your staff, providing broad information about the business and the industry, providing feedback and recognising their achievements.

When a significant problem arises, it is a good idea to give advance notice to the apprentice or trainee that you want to discuss it with them. Encourage their ideas for improvement. Schedule your discussion for 24 hours later to allow any strong emotions of either party to dissipate, so your discussion can be positive and focused on desired actions and behaviour.

Effective coaching

The following are a few tips to assist you in providing effective on-the-job training and coaching:

- Acknowledge what the apprentice or trainee already knows – they may have knowledge and experience that they have gained in a variety of ways, e.g. school, hobbies or previous employment.
- Explain the 'big picture' – give reasons why a particular task may need to be done in a certain way. In your explanation draw on real examples.
- Provide incentives to learn new tasks and skills – explain what the apprentice or trainee will achieve.
- Provide choice – everyone learns differently. Find out from the apprentice or trainee how they like to learn, e.g. do they prefer written instructions or to be shown how to do something a number of times, or a combination and deliver your on-the-job training this way.
- Remember that where skills are being learned, you will need to give the learner the opportunity to practice regularly to build their skills and competence.
- Encourage initiative and innovative thought by listening to the apprentice or trainee's ideas and providing feedback.
- Establish regular communication with the apprentice or trainee. Let them know how and how often you are going to communicate with them. Provide feedback and ensure a two way communication flow. Confirm whether your instructions are clear, simple and understood.
- Check that you have realistic expectations.
- People work and learn best in a supportive environment so make sure that you act immediately against any bullying or harassment you become aware of.

This chart provides a six step process for effective coaching

Six steps to effective supervisor coaching

One

Explain the task to the apprentice or trainee, its purpose and why it needs to be done

Two

Explain to the apprentice or trainee all the steps in completing the task

Three

Demonstrate the task and explain what will be assessed and how it will be assessed and recorded

Four

Provide the apprentice or trainee with sufficient opportunity to practice

Five

Provide positive feedback and help to organise assessments with the RTO

Six

When a competency has been achieved, ensure the apprentice or trainee is advised and the RTO confirms competence

Establish acceptable business behaviours and ground rules for performance, and talk about these with your apprentice or trainee. Communicating consistently and role modelling these expectations will inspire and motivate your apprentice or trainee to do the same.

Understanding aids learning

People learn best when actively involved in their learning, so when teaching your apprentice or trainee a new task make sure they know why they are doing things, why these things are important, and how and when they will be assessed on it.

Clear communication

Take time to think about the instructions you give. Write down your instructions or break the job into steps if necessary. To give clear instructions you should:

- assume no prior knowledge
- explain why the job is done this way
- use clear and simple language
- include safe work practices in your instructions
- ask the apprentice or trainee to repeat the instructions back to you to check their understanding
- make sure there are no distractions.

Demonstration

Take time to show your apprentice or trainee how to do things the correct way. You may find it helps to break the task down into manageable pieces. Demonstration is a quick and effective way to:

- show the learner correct procedures and sequences

- explain why the task is done in this way
- use correct work practices.

Practice makes perfect

Allow time for the apprentice or trainee to practice new skills. Everyone makes mistakes, so expect mistakes. Point the apprentice or trainee in the right direction. Spaced repetition of new skills and tasks will build competence. Watch and coach, and:

- be patient
- ask questions to encourage the apprentice or trainee to think about the task e.g. *"That's right Sarah, now what should you do next?"*, or *"If the nut is seized on the bolt, how could you loosen it?"*
- give praise when it is due
- suggest ways to improve and highlight progress, e.g. *"You've mastered the register Jason, now I want you to concentrate on customer service"*.

Ask questions

- Check for understanding, e.g. *"What are the four steps in checking the order form?"*.
- Involve the apprentice or trainee in decision making, e.g. *"Should we set the guide rails now?"*.
- Obtain information and feedback, e.g. *"How is your training in power tools going, is there anything you don't understand?"*.

What it means for the Apprentice or Trainee to be competent

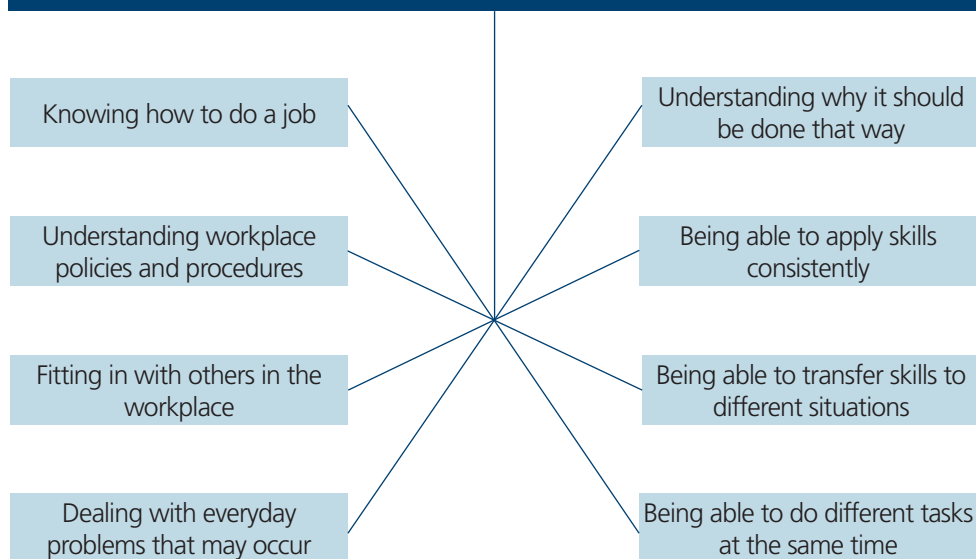
Both apprenticeships and traineeships are based on learning and developing skills through a combination of hands-on experience and structured training.

An apprentice or trainee is competent in our training system when they are able to apply their knowledge and skills to successfully complete work activities in a range of situations and environments, measured against the standard of

performance expected in the workplace and across industry.

Competency includes what are known as employability skills – the ability to support the workplace through communication, team work, problem solving, self-management, planning and organising, using technology, learning, and taking initiative.

Being competent means:



Lecturing versus Coaching? Constant lecturing will make your apprentice or trainee tune out. Asking questions will help engage them in the discussion and get them thinking about different approaches. Often people learn more when given a chance to try something themselves, even if it means potentially having to learn from a mistake.

What are workplace competencies?

Competencies are sets of skills and knowledge relevant to the workplace that have been developed by industry. Every competency is made up of elements or tasks. The competencies that each apprentice or trainee must achieve are specified in their Training Plan. For most trades and traineeships, there will be compulsory (or core) competencies plus competencies that have been selected because they match the work being done in the workplace.

Examples of competencies for someone waiting on tables in the hospitality industry might include:

- Provide a link between kitchen and service areas
- Promote products and services to customers
- Provide food and beverage service.

Examples of competencies for someone working as a customer service assistant in the retail industry might include:

- Work effectively in a retail environment
- Communicate in the workplace
- Apply point-of-sale handling procedures.

To complete an apprenticeship or traineeship and receive a qualification, the learner must successfully complete all of the units of competency that make up the National Qualification.

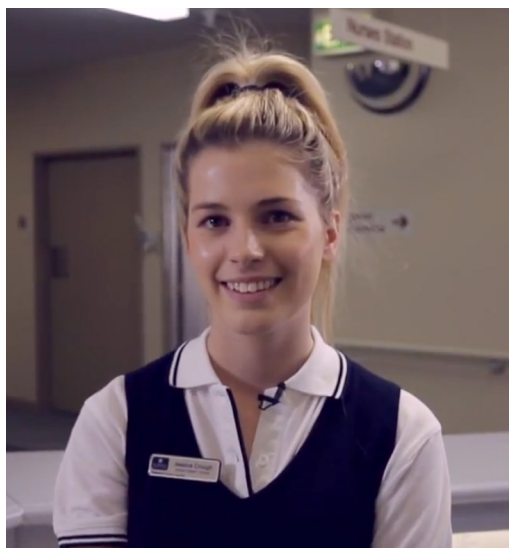
Once the RTO has issued the National Qualification an opportunity is available to make an application for competency based completion (CBC) of the traineeship or apprenticeship.

What is assessment?

Assessment means collecting evidence about the apprentice or trainee's skills and knowledge, comparing the evidence to a set of industry-based standards and judging whether, on the basis of the evidence gathered, the learner meets those standards.

Forms of evidence that may be used to support assessment of competencies include written tests and assignments, practical tests, observation of skills being applied in the workplace, and reports from supervisors and managers about the range and quality of work performed by their employee.

The RTO assessor will carry out the assessment. This will mean determining whether the apprentice or trainee is 'competent' or 'not yet competent' (some RTOs may use slightly different terms).



As a workplace supervisor you will be required to make decisions on the apprentice or trainee's competence. You will be requested to provide evidence of how they have applied their skills in the workplace.

This evidence can take many forms. Please see the example below:

Brett has been offered a traineeship with a large department store in the city. He is very keen on the traineeship as he has been working part-time at the store since he was at school. He is, however, concerned about what's actually involved in a traineeship – particularly about the assessment part – as he has been advised he will be 'assessed' as to whether he is a competent sales assistant. As Brett has never been keen on formal assessment he is worried about what may happen if he is not considered to be a competent sales assistant.

Brett, his supervisor and the RTO assessor hold a meeting to discuss the assessment requirements. This meeting allows both Brett and his supervisor to negotiate the assessment details with the assessor and results in the development of an assessment plan. The assessor guides both parties through the process, explaining the:

- *roles and responsibilities of all involved*
- *assessment evidence the assessor will require*
- *methods used to gather the evidence for assessment*
- *options regarding the outcomes of the assessment.*

The RTO assessor negotiates an assessment schedule so Brett and his supervisor know when to expect monitoring and assessment visits. These visits are used to monitor Brett's progress and to provide feedback.

The assessor explains that the assessment will involve a combination of Brett being observed doing work, demonstrating tasks to the assessor, participating in role play situations where unusual scenarios like dealing with difficult customers can be assessed, answering questions about his work tasks and having his work performance checked with his supervisor.

After seeking agreement with Brett and his supervisor as to the way the evidence will be collected and documented, the assessment plan is agreed to and signed by the three parties. Both Brett and his supervisor are provided with copies of the tasks and the assessment tools that will be used. This ensures clarity and helps to avoid any possible misunderstandings.

Brett has the opportunity to ask questions about observations that will take place as a component of the evidence gathering by both his supervisor and the RTO assessor. A copy of the assessment tools for the observations is given to Brett to enable him to determine when he is ready to be assessed.

As a result of this meeting, an agreed assessment plan has been developed and Brett and his supervisor have had their questions answered. Now that he understands the process, Brett is no longer concerned about the assessments. The supervisor is now confident that the proposed methods of assessment will meet the needs of the workplace and reflect current industry standards and workplace practice. The RTO assessor has confirmed that the approach agreed on, and the evidence gathered, will meet national assessment standards.

What records does the supervisor keep?

As the workplace supervisor involved in supervising an apprentice or trainee you are required to maintain certain records to confirm that effective training is occurring.

The table below sets out the basic record keeping requirements, however they may vary depending on workplace requirements.

Records that must be kept	Workplace supervisor's role
Approval letter from State Training Services stating that the Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract has been approved	None - The employer should keep this
Copy of the Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract	None - The employer should keep this
Copy of the Training Plan	You need this to monitor the apprentice or trainee's skills development and progress
Record of the time the RTO spends with you and the apprentice or trainee at the workplace, and what activities were undertaken	This will demonstrate to you the type and level of training the RTO is providing to the apprentice or trainee
Record of time worked and wages paid	These records must be kept by the employer. You may possibly keep a record of time worked for learning purposes
Results of any on-the-job training undertaken by the apprentice or trainee with the RTO	You may need to provide information for this, and it would help to keep a copy for your information
Apprentice or trainee's workbook/record of training supplied by the RTO	Discuss progress regularly with the apprentice or trainee and the RTO. Sign off on-the-job experience and competence as agreed with the RTO
Copy of the industrial award or workplace agreement under which the apprentice or trainee is employed	The employer keeps these records and a copy should be available to the apprentice or trainee. You may also need to know this information

What if I have a problem?

General workplace issues

As the workplace supervisor of an apprentice or trainee, you will have support from your employer and possibly other supervisors at your workplace who have either been apprentices or trainees themselves, or have been workplace supervisors before.

Training Plan

The Training Plan, which has been negotiated between the employer, the apprentice or trainee and the RTO is the essential guide to the what, where and when of training and assessment and will guide you through the training process. The RTO representative should be your first point of contact for questions about the Training Plan.

Training issues

If you have general questions about apprenticeships or traineeships or you are:

- experiencing difficulties with your RTO that you cannot resolve
- experiencing difficulties in the workplace, or
- concerned about the progress of your apprentice or trainee,

contact a Training Advisor at your STS regional office by phoning **13 28 11** or see **www.training.nsw.gov.au** and click on Contact Us.

Financial incentives

If you have questions about the payment of government incentives to your organisation or to your apprentice or trainee, contact your Australian Apprenticeships Centre (AAC). See www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au for a list of AACs.

Resources for Supervisors

General information on apprenticeships and traineeships is available on the internet, and the websites listed here are a useful starting point. Some of these sites contain a wide range of information and will require you to navigate through the content to find answers to specific questions:

- www.training.nsw.gov.au
- www.sbatinnsw.info
- www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au

Some useful publications include:

- The State Training Services booklet *A Guide to Apprenticeships and Traineeships in NSW* can be found at www.training.nsw.gov.au
- The NSW Office of Industrial Relations has information on workplace laws for employers of young workers.
www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au
- The Fair Work website has information on National Employment Standards and Modern Awards. This information is relevant to all NSW employees, including apprentices and trainees, employed in the private sector.
www.fwa.gov.au
- The NSW WorkCover website has information on safety and risk management for all workers.
www.workcover.nsw.gov.au

Numerous books are available on the topic of supervision and can be found in major book shops and libraries.

In addition, there are also industry bodies, including National Industry Skills Councils and State Industry Training Advisory Bodies, which develop competency standards for each main industry and provide advice about training. See www.training.nsw.gov.au for a listing of NSW industry bodies. Useful information on supervision techniques is published by the following bodies:

- National Meat Industry Training Council
www.mintrac.com.au
- Motor Traders Association of NSW
www.training.mtansw.com.au
- Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council www.cshisc.com.au
- Service Skills Australia
www.serviceskills.com.au
- Innovation and Business Skills Australia
www.ibsa.org.au
- Australian Industry Group
www.aigroup.com.au and click on Education and Training Services

APPENDIX:

Detailed information on Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Who is involved in apprenticeships and traineeships?

The key people and agencies directly involved are identified in the diagram below. Other agencies involved can include WorkCover, unions and employer organisations.



What are the roles and responsibilities of those involved?

The Employer

Apprenticeships and traineeships start with the employer, who selects and recruits a suitable person and then contacts an AAC to arrange the Training Contract and other necessary paperwork.

Employers have a range of responsibilities. They must provide a workplace where learning can occur, and have an obligation to ensure that the apprentice or trainee has every opportunity to complete their training.

Employers have both a business incentive and a legal requirement to provide a safe and harmonious workplace, supportive of learning. Having entered into a Training Contract you have accepted an obligation to ensure the apprentice or trainee has access to appropriate instruction and practical experience, to provide appropriate wages and conditions of employment, and to keep STS informed of any changes to the Training Contract.

Where the apprentice or trainee is a young person under 18 years of age, employers have additional responsibilities under the NSW child protection legislation.

Under current legislation employers have a responsibility to:

- ensure the learner receives the instruction, practice and support they need to develop the skills in all aspects of their vocation
- release the apprentice or trainee as required during work hours to undertake training and assessment provided by the RTO
- ensure that the apprentice or trainee is instructed and supervised by a supervisor competent in the relevant vocation
- provide a workplace that is safe, conducive to learning and free from bullying, harassment or discrimination
- ensure workplace arrangements, wages and conditions comply with relevant state and federal industrial laws
- where they employ an apprentice or trainee younger than 18 years of age, exercise an appropriate duty of care
- where the business is in an industry identified by NSW legislation as 'child-related employment', conduct a Working With Children Check for new employees and meet other safeguards as specified by the NSW Commission For Children and Young People
- advise STS of any proposed changes to the Training Contract.

It is worth keeping in mind that employment conditions tend to be the crucial factor in decisions made by apprentices and trainees in changing employers.

Fair pay and conditions, supportive working relationships and quality training enhances the successful completion of apprenticeships and traineeships, reduce staff turnover and ensure a supply of skilled committed staff. Your business also benefits from increased staff motivation, greater productivity and reduced absenteeism.

Factors which contribute to a productive, harmonious workplace and positive training and performance outcomes include:

- a consultative and co-operative approach to workplace arrangements
- wage progression based on acquiring additional skills and competencies
- employment conditions that support training such as paid time to attend off-the-job training or self-paced learning, reimbursement of course fees and cost of textbooks, tool allowances, and sufficient tradespeople to provide on-the-job supervision
- other provisions such as overtime, penalty and shift rates and flexible work practices which balance business needs with employees' family responsibilities
- a safe workplace free from bullying, harassment and discrimination
- compliance with relevant state and federal industrial laws including child employment legislation.

In all apprenticeships and traineeships the employer is able to choose which RTO will provide the training for their learner, as well as choosing the delivery pattern.

The Group Training Organisation

As an alternative to employing an apprentice or trainee directly, a business may use a Group Training Organisation (GTO) to provide the apprentice or trainee. In these cases the GTO is the legal employer and the business where the apprentice or trainee works is the 'host' employer.

The GTO selects and employs the apprentice or trainee and places them with the host employer for as long as is required. The GTO, as the legal employer, is responsible for wages, payroll tax and workers compensation for the apprentice or trainee. The host employer will provide the opportunity for the apprentice or trainee to gain practical skills through working and training under supervision.

There are around 150 Group Training Organisations throughout Australia, employing tens of thousands of apprentices and trainees hosted through businesses right across the country.

For more information go to:
www.grouptraining.com.au

The Apprentice or Trainee

The role of the apprentice or trainee is to undertake the course of training prescribed in the Training Contract and carry out all lawful instructions of the employer. By entering into the Training Contract the apprentice or trainee makes a formal commitment to:

- acquire the skills of the vocation
- obtain the appropriate qualification as shown on the Training Plan
- accept instruction and training in the workplace
- attend scheduled training delivered by the RTO or other selected mode in accordance with the Training Plan
- complete assignments and other assessment tasks set by the RTO
- maintain record books and work evidence guide if required
- contribute to maintaining a safe and supportive workplace
- carry out their obligations as an employee.

The Australian Apprenticeships Centre

The role of the Australian Apprenticeships Centre, or AAC, is to assist you in identifying appropriate training opportunities within your organisation and to subsequently establish the Training Contract with the apprentices and trainees whom you employ. The AAC will explain the rights and responsibilities of the apprentice or trainee and the employer, the role of the RTO and STS and will advise you of any NSW and Australian Government incentives and subsidies that may apply.

AACs are contracted by the Australian Government to provide a free service to both you and your apprentice or trainee. In addition to preparing the traineeship and apprenticeship Training Contracts they are required to contact you and your apprentice or trainee at designated times to ensure that training is progressing satisfactorily.



The AAC assists through:

- providing information on traineeship and apprenticeship options to employers
- providing information about training packages and suitable training pathways for the apprentice or trainee
- establishing effective relationships with Job Network members, RTOs, schools and other organisations
- working with STS to provide an integrated service to employers
- providing information on training delivery options to suit the employer's work environment
- providing information about RTOs that can deliver the training in the qualifications and geographical area to suit the employer and apprentice or trainee
- marketing and promoting traineeships and apprenticeships in the local area
- providing resource information to the employer and trainee or apprentice, e.g. contact details for awards information
- providing ongoing support and advice to the employer and trainee or apprentice throughout the training
- administering Australian Government incentive payments to employers.

AACs operate from over 500 sites Australia-wide. To find an AAC call **13 38 73** or go to **www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au**

The Registered Training Organisation (RTO)

The RTO delivers training to the apprentice or trainee leading to a nationally accredited qualification.

The RTO develops a Training Plan Proposal with you and the apprentice or trainee. The Training Plan Proposal confirms the qualification to be delivered, the delivery pathway and the date that training will commence.

The Training Plan should be developed and customised by the RTO within 12 weeks from the approval of the Training Contract. For school-based apprenticeships/traineeship, the Training Plan must be prepared at commencement of the Training Contract. This is done in consultation with the employer and apprentice or trainee. This is to ensure that the competencies that make up the qualification are most relevant to your business.

Credit for any competencies already held by the apprentice or trainee must be incorporated into the Training Plan through the process of recognition of prior learning, generally referred to as RPL. At this stage any additional needs the apprentice or trainee may have in terms of literacy, numeracy or other support should be identified and provided for. Additional payments to provide this support are available to the RTO in many cases.

The RTO should negotiate with the employer and/or supervisor the part that each will play in both training delivery and assessment. The Training Plan is a living document and should contain the next 6 months worth of planned training and assessment.

The RTO must provide a copy of the Training Plan to all parties.

The Registered Training Organisation, cont.

The RTO will provide:

- printed training materials or online learning resources to the apprentice or trainee
- materials or resources to the supervisor to support them in performing their agreed role in training delivery and assessment
- regular reports to the employer and/or supervisor on the progress of the training and on competencies achieved. The employer and/or supervisor may need to initiate the request for this regular feedback on the apprentice or trainee's progress.

In summary the RTO has to:

- develop a Training Plan Proposal
- develop and sign-off the Training Plan with the apprentice or trainee and employer
- provide training resources to the learner
- deliver structured training customised to the workplace and according to the Training Plan
- keep a record of training outcomes and qualifications issued according to national requirements
- maintain records of the apprentice or trainee's progress and any problems
- identify and meet any additional support needs that the apprentice or trainee may require relating to their formal training
- ensure competencies can be achieved by the apprentice or trainee in the workplace
- support the workplace supervisor and the apprentice or trainee

- provide information to the supervisor on their roles and responsibilities
- liaise with the employer during the training period
- assist the supervisor in providing workplace training if required
- monitor the apprentice or trainee's progress against the Training Plan
- assess the apprentice or trainee's competence in consultation with the employer
- issue a qualification to the apprentice or trainee when all competencies are achieved.

To find an RTO visit **www.training.nsw.gov.au** and follow the link to 'Looking For Training?'

The Workplace Supervisor

The role of the workplace supervisor (who may also be the employer) will vary from organisation to organisation. Generally, the workplace supervisor acts as a role model and workplace coach for the apprentice or trainee as described in the first part of this guide.

State Training Services, NSW

Department of Education and Communities

State Training Services (STS) is the government agency responsible for managing apprenticeships and traineeships in NSW. Through the network of STS regional offices you can obtain assistance and information on all aspects of apprenticeships and traineeships.

Under the *NSW Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001*, STS staff are able to:

- approve or dismiss applications to establish an apprenticeship or traineeship
- ensure that apprentices, trainees and their employers carry out their responsibilities under the Training Contract
- visit workplaces and view employment and training records to ensure apprentices and trainees are making satisfactory progress

- help to resolve any disputes that may arise between employers and their apprentices or trainees
- refer any disputes that can't be resolved locally to the Vocational Training Tribunal
- approve CBC of an apprenticeship or traineeship provided all requirements have been met
- issue a Certificate of Proficiency on successful completion of the apprenticeship or traineeship
- provide advice about cancellation, suspension or transfer of an apprenticeship or traineeship, or other changes to a Training Contract.

You can contact your nearest State Training Services regional office by calling **13 28 11** or visiting **www.training.nsw.gov.au**



Getting started: How is an apprenticeship or traineeship arranged?

Step 1

Identify the opportunities

The decision to establish an apprenticeship or traineeship may be as simple as replacing a graduating apprentice or trainee, or may result from a more comprehensive exercise identifying training opportunities across your organisation.

Your AAC will be happy to visit you and provide advice about suitable apprenticeships and traineeships for your organisation, choices of RTO and delivery of training, and eligibility to receive State and Australian Government financial incentives.

Step 2

Finding the right person

Recruiting and selecting an apprentice or trainee is a strategic way of growing and sustaining your business for the future. Using good selection and recruitment techniques to identify the most appropriate applicants can save you money by minimising staff turnover. Before you start recruiting, ensure you have a written position description for the apprentice or trainee role, as this is a critical tool for managing their ongoing performance in the workplace. For each applicant the selection process should try to evaluate:

- their knowledge of the industry or profession you are in and what you are offering regarding an apprenticeship or traineeship
- how realistic their expectations are of the day-to-day work they will be undertaking
- their motivation to succeed in achieving the qualification
- their suitability for the position
- their previous experience in similar activities
- their long-term aspirations
- their experience in working in teams and communicating with others.

Apprentices

An apprentice can be a new employee or someone you have employed for some time. You're never too old to start an apprenticeship and recent figures show that employers are more commonly engaging older apprentices. You can also employ a current school student as a school-based apprentice on a part-time basis while they undertake the HSC.

Trainees

A trainee can be a new entrant to your organisation or an existing worker. A new entrant trainee can be found by advertising, through a job network agency, or by contacting a careers advisor at your local secondary school for referral of current or former students who may be interested.

An existing worker trainee can be found within your current workforce. Trainees can be shared between two or more businesses by hosting the trainee through a Group Training Organisation, allowing each business to provide part-time work. There is also the opportunity to employ a current school student as a school-based trainee.

Note that traineeships may be suitable for mature-aged people re-entering the workforce after an absence or looking to gain additional skills.

Step 3

Arranging the paperwork

Arrange for an AAC representative to visit your organisation to complete an Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract with you and your proposed apprentice or trainee.

Step 4

Sign-up

At this stage the AAC representative will explain the roles and responsibilities of the employer and the apprentice or trainee, the choice of RTO, how the training will be delivered and any financial incentives that may be available. Any possible reduction of the training duration due to prior experience of the apprentice or trainee can be discussed at this point. A Training Contract will be signed by the employer and the apprentice or trainee (and their parent/guardian if they are under 18 years of age).

A Training Plan Proposal is also completed at sign-up and is endorsed by the RTO. The Proposal indicates the qualification to be delivered, the mode of training delivery and where the training will be delivered. Endorsement by the RTO secures a training place at the start date indicated.

Step 5

Get approval

The AAC checks the Training Contract and Training Plan Proposal and lodges these with STS for approval. On-the-job training should start from the commencement date of the Training Contract and formal training delivery from the RTO should start as soon as practicable. STS will send a letter to the employer and apprentice or trainee confirming approval and indicating any probationary period.

There are special arrangements for school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. For more information contact a Training Advisor at your nearest STS regional office by calling **13 28 11**.

Dealing with workplace issues

There are a wide range of things that apprentices and trainees do, or fail to do, that may cause a problem for employers and workplace supervisors.

Issues that may be of concern include:

- Poor standard of work
- Failure to develop skills even though training is being provided
- Failure to make satisfactory progress in the formal training delivered by the training organisation
- Not working safely
- Failure to follow supervisors' instructions
- Poor attendance, punctuality or presentation
- Poor customer service skills
- Personality clashes with other workers or lack of team skills
- Serious breaches of workplace discipline.

As the workplace supervisor, you have a critical role in identifying issues that are preventing an apprentice or trainee from making good progress in his or her training, and becoming a valuable member of the business. If you are unable to sort things out informally, consider calling on the support and expertise of others in your organisation to help you. There may come a time when it is appropriate to set a formal meeting with the apprentice or trainee to discuss the problem and agree on a course of action. At this stage you should probably involve your manager or HR Manager in the process if you haven't already done so.

Principles in dealing with workplace problems

- Intervene early before a minor issue becomes a big problem
- Provide feedback to your apprentice or trainee, even if it's negative feedback, in a constructive way
- Always remain calm, and be clear about what you want. If necessary write down what you're unhappy about, and what improvement you're looking for
- Give people a second chance. There are not many behaviours that are so serious or dangerous that the person doesn't deserve an opportunity to set things right
- Make allowances for age and inexperience. Everyone makes mistakes and needs guidance from time to time. It's when people don't respond positively to advice or guidance that you may need to take a matter further
- Make sure you are fair in your dealings with the apprentice or trainee. Give them a chance to respond to any criticisms. If they are minors, encourage a parent or guardian to attend any counselling sessions or formal meetings
- Even if they are in the wrong, recognise the rights of the apprentice or trainee. If the position of the apprentice or trainee has become untenable, don't threaten to sack them – rather, tell them you will be applying to State Training Services for cancellation of the Training Contract.

Assistance from State Training Services

State Training Services Training Advisors are available to help you when things go wrong, or if you are concerned that things may go wrong in the future. They have extensive experience assisting employers, apprentices and trainees to deal with issues that, if unchecked, can threaten the progress of the apprenticeship or traineeship. Our aim is to provide impartial advice that helps to get the training program back on track. Employers, apprentices and trainees may speak to an STS Training Advisor on a confidential basis if they wish.

You should contact STS in any of the following circumstances:

- You have identified a workplace issue that is threatening or may threaten the successful completion of the apprenticeship or traineeship and you need advice or assistance
- You are managing a workplace issue relating to an apprentice or trainee and want to brief STS about what you have done to date (especially if you think you may need to apply for cancellation of the apprenticeship or traineeship in the future)
- You have tried counselling an apprentice or trainee about a workplace issue but there is no evidence of the improvement or change you were seeking.

What happens if workplace issues cannot be resolved?

If a workplace issue is so serious or intractable that the employer wants to put off the apprentice or trainee, or the apprentice or trainee wants to leave, either one or both parties may apply for cancellation of the Training Contract. Apprenticeships and traineeships can be cancelled by the mutual consent of the employer and the apprentice or trainee. If there is no agreement between the parties, STS Training Advisors can negotiate with both parties and help them reach agreement about whether the apprenticeship or traineeship should be cancelled or should continue. If it is to continue, the Training Advisor can arrange a review period during which progress in overcoming the problem will be monitored.

Most workplace issues can be resolved informally and at the local level, but if the parties cannot reach agreement the STS Training Advisor may refer the matter to the Vocational Training Tribunal (VTT) for resolution. The VTT is an independent panel comprising of the Chairperson of the Tribunal, representatives of employer bodies and trade unions. The VTT will arrange a hearing at which both parties can explain what they want to happen, and why. The VTT has authority under the *NSW Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001* to make a determination that binds both the employer and the apprentice or trainee.

STATE TRAINING SERVICES

REGIONAL OFFICES

Central & Northern Sydney

Level 13, 12 Help Street
Chatswood NSW 2067
Email: nsydneystc@det.nsw.edu.au
Ph: (02) 9242 1700 Fax: (02) 9415 3979

Southern Sydney & South West Sydney

Level 2, 41- 45 Rickard Road
Bankstown NSW 2200
Email: swsydneystc@det.nsw.edu.au
Ph: (02) 8707 9600 Fax: (02) 9709 5356

Western Sydney & Blue Mountains

Ground Floor, 16-18 Wentworth Street
Parramatta NSW 2150
Email: wsydneystc@det.nsw.edu.au
Ph: (02) 9204 7400 Fax: (02) 9635 9775

Campbelltown

Suite 601, 171-179 Queen Street
Campbelltown NSW 2560
Email: STSCampbelltown@det.nsw.edu.au
Ph: (02) 4633 2800 Fax: (02) 4633 2819

Illawarra & South East NSW

Level 1, Block E State Office Block
84 Crown Street
Wollongong NSW 2500
Email: illawarrastc@det.nsw.edu.au
Ph: (02) 4224 9300 Fax: (02) 4224 9334

Hunter & Central Coast

Newcastle TAFE Campus
Block P, Maitland Road
Tighes Hill West NSW 2297
Email: hunterstc@det.nsw.edu.au
Ph: (02) 4974 8570 Fax: (02) 4925 2139

Singleton

Suite 2, 6 Castlereagh Street
Singleton NSW 2330
Email: STSSingleton@det.nsw.edu.au
Ph: (02) 6571 1571 Fax: (02) 6572 2853

New England

155-157 Marius Street
Tamworth NSW 2340
Email: newenglandstc@det.nsw.edu.au
Ph: (02) 6755 5099 Fax: (02) 6766 4120

North Coast & Mid North Coast

Suite 3, Level 4, 29 Molesworth Street
Lismore NSW 2480
Email: ncoaststc@det.nsw.edu.au
Ph: (02) 6627 8400 Fax: (02) 6621 9994

Coffs Harbour

Suite 1, 144-148 West High Street
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450
Email: STSCoffsHarbour@det.nsw.edu.au
Ph: (02) 6648 7333 Fax: (02) 6648 7332

Riverina

87 Forsyth Street
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650
Email: riverinastc@det.nsw.edu.au
Ph: (02) 6937 7600 Fax: (02) 6921 0724

Queanbeyan

Suite 105, 1st Floor, Riverside Plaza
131 Monaro Street
Queanbeyan NSW 2620
Email: STSQueanbeyan@det.nsw.edu.au
Ph: (02) 6128 3441 Fax: (02) 6128 3440

Western NSW

Level 1, State Office Block
Cnr Kite & Anson Streets
Orange NSW 2800
Email: westernnswstc@det.nsw.edu.au
Ph: (02) 6392 8500 Fax: (02) 6392 8539

Griffith

Email: STSGriffith@det.nsw.edu.au
Phone: 0477 346 095

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Supervising your apprentice or trainee

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