

# Supervising your apprentice or trainee

A guide for  
workplace supervisors

October 2018



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# Leading the way

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



More employees who can work and perform unsupervised



Higher-quality products and services



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 Industry 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 Training Services NSW (see Appendix: What are the roles and responsibilities of those involved? [page 28](#)).



## 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 3000 RTOs approved to deliver 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.

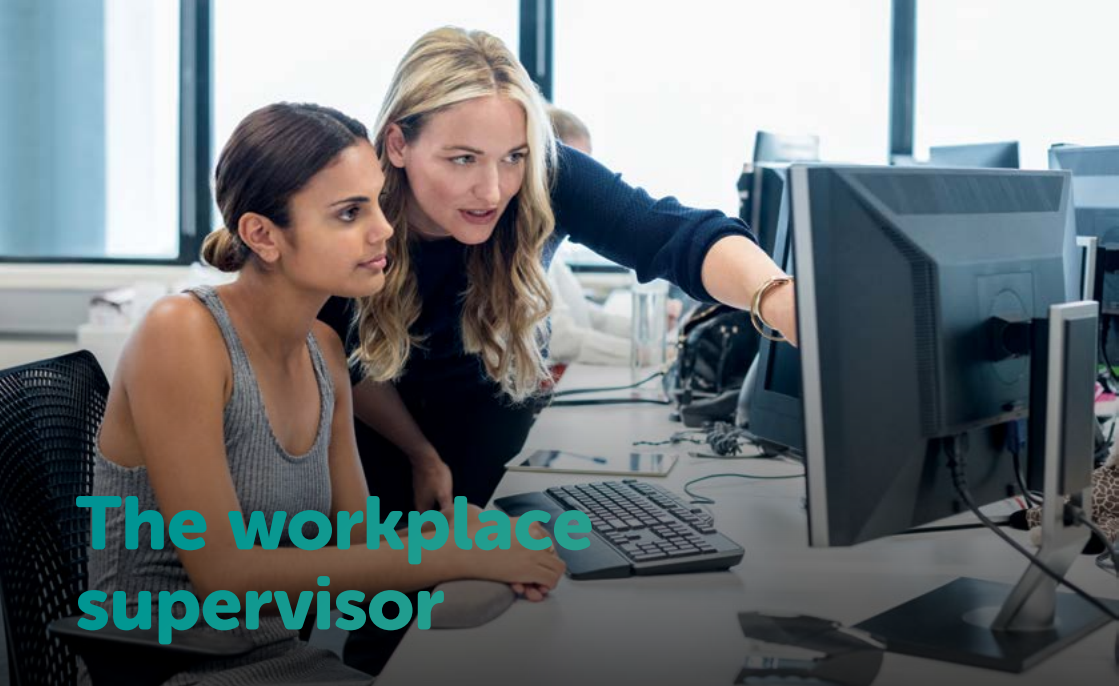
Whichever formal training pathway is chosen, the employer must release the apprentice or trainee during paid work time to undertake their formal training and assessment. The Training Plan documents this employer obligation.

Training wages for new entrant apprentices and trainees 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 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 Training Services NSW website [www.training.nsw.gov.au](http://www.training.nsw.gov.au)



# The workplace supervisor

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.

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 for answering 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, WH&S information, etc. Supervisors also ensure the apprentice or trainee is not harassed or bullied in the workplace.



## 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's 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



Promotes independence and self-direction in learning



Manages the apprentice's or trainee's training needs and motivation



Provides regular feedback and encouragement



Maintains records of progress



Helps the apprentice or trainee develop problem solving and general employability skills.

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



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

## 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, 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.

## 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 and traineeships 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 in the diagram:

## The workplace supervisor will...



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.



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 encouragement and feedback



Monitor progress towards completion



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



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.



### **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 get adequate sleep and to avoid alcohol and drugs, so that the apprentice or trainee 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 it will take them to reach full proficiency
- Reduce staff turnover
- Provide you with a better understanding of their strengths and career aspirations.

First impressions count—the new apprentice's 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.



### 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 above that relate to training are covered, particularly discussion of the Training Plan and the Training Contract.

## What does being a workplace coach mean?

In your role as a supervisor you will undoubtedly be providing on-the-job training and coaching of 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 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 skills are being learned**—you will need to give the learner the opportunity to practise regularly to build their skills and competence.
- **Encourage initiative and innovative thought**—listen to the apprentice's or trainee's ideas and provide 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**—discuss with your apprentice or trainee of the day-to-day work they will be undertaking.
- **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.



# Six steps to effective supervisor coaching



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



**2** Explain to the apprentice or trainee all the steps in completing the task.



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



**4** Provide the apprentice or trainee with sufficient opportunity to practise.



**5** Provide positive feedback and help to organise assessments with the RTO.



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





## Practical tips for coaching

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  
assists learning



Clear  
communication



Demonstration



Practice  
makes perfect



Ask questions



### Understanding assists 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.



## Practice makes perfect

Allow time for the apprentice or trainee to practise 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.'*



## 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 this way
- Use correct work practices.



## 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
- Be 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
- Taking initiative.



**Knowing how to do a job**



**Understanding workplace policies and procedures**



**Fitting in with others in the workplace**



**Dealing with everyday problems that may occur**

**Being competent means**



**Understanding why it should be done that way**



**Being able to apply skills consistently**



**Being able to transfer skills to different situations**



**Being able to do different tasks at the same time**



**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 apprenticeships 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 apprenticeship or traineeship.



## What is assessment?

Assessment means collecting evidence about the apprentice's 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
- Reports from supervisors and managers about the range and quality of work performed.

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's 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 case study on the next page.





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
- The assessment evidence the assessor will require
- The methods used to gather the evidence for assessment
- The 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 do I need to 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 workspace requirements.

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



# 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 either have 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. It 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
- Concerned about the progress of your apprentice or trainee.

Contact your local Training Services NSW regional centre by phoning **13 28 11** or see [www.training.nsw.gov.au](http://www.training.nsw.gov.au) and click on Contacts.

## Financial Incentives

If you have questions about the payment of government incentives to your organisation or to your apprentice or trainee, contact your Apprenticeship Network Provider (ANP). For a list of ANPs, see [www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au)

# 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](http://www.training.nsw.gov.au)

[www.sbatinnsw.info](http://www.sbatinnsw.info)

[www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au)

## Some useful publications

- The Training Services NSW booklet A Guide to Apprenticeships and Traineeships in NSW can be found at [www.training.nsw.gov.au](http://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](http://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.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)
- The NSW WorkCover website has information on safety and risk management for all workers [www.workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://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 Skills Service Organisations which develop competency standards for each main industry
- State Industry Training Advisory Bodies that provide advice about training. See [www.training.nsw.gov.au](http://www.training.nsw.gov.au) for a list of NSW Industry Bodies.



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# 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.



# 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 Apprenticeship Network Provider (ANP) 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, employers 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
- To keep Training Services NSW 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 Training Services NSW 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 balancing business needs with employees' family responsibilities
- 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](http://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 Apprenticeship Network Provider (ANP)

The role of the ANP is to assist the employer in identifying appropriate training opportunities within their organisation and to subsequently establish the Training Contract with the apprentices and trainees they employ.

The ANP will:

- Explain the rights and responsibilities of the apprentice or trainee and the employer
- Explain the roles of the RTO and Training Services NSW
- Advise the employer of any NSW and Australian Government incentives and subsidies that may apply.

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

### The ANP assists through:

- Providing information on apprenticeship and traineeship 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 Training Services NSW 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 qualification and geographical area to suit the employer and apprentice or trainee
- Marketing and promoting apprenticeships and traineeships in the local area
- Providing resource information to the employer and apprentice or trainee, e.g. contact details for awards information
- Providing ongoing support and advice to the employer and apprentice or trainee throughout the training
- Administering Australian Government incentive payments to employers.

ANPs operate from over 400 sites Australia wide. To find an ANP call **13 38 73** or go to [www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au)



## The Registered Training Organisation (RTO)

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

At the start of an apprenticeship or traineeship, the RTO develops a Training Plan Proposal (TPP) 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 TPP forms part of your application to establish an apprenticeship or traineeship.

The full Training Plan must be developed by the RTO within 12 weeks from the approval of the Training Contract. This is done in consultation with the employer and apprentice or trainee to ensure that the competencies that make up the qualification are most relevant to the business requirements.

For school-based apprenticeships or traineeships, the Training Plan must be prepared at commencement of the Training Contract.

To find an RTO who is approved to deliver government subsidised training, visit [smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au](http://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au)

Credit for any competencies already held by the apprentice or trainee must be incorporated into the Training Plan through the process of Credit Transfer.

An apprentice or trainee can also have their prior qualifications, informal learning, skills and knowledge formally assessed and recognised through the process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and/or Recognition of Current Competencies (RCC).

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 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's or trainee's progress.

### In summary the RTO has to:

- Develop a TPP
- Develop and review 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's 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 to support them in performing their role in training delivery and assessment
- Liaise with the employer during the training period
- Assist the supervisor in providing workplace training if required
- Monitor the apprentice's or trainee's progress against the Training Plan
- Assess the apprentice's or trainee's competence in consultation with the employer
- Issue a qualification to the apprentice or trainee when all competencies are achieved.



## 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.





## Training Services NSW, NSW Department of Industry

Training Services NSW is the government agency responsible for managing apprenticeships and traineeships in NSW. Through the network of Regional Centres, employer and apprentice or trainee can obtain assistance and information on all aspects of apprenticeships and traineeships.



### **Under the *NSW Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001*, Training Services NSW 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 Commissioner for Vocational Training
- Approve Competency Based Completion (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 Training Services NSW Regional Centre by calling **13 28 11** or visiting [www.training.nsw.gov.au](http://www.training.nsw.gov.au)

# Getting started for employers: 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 ANP will be happy to visit you and provide advice about suitable apprenticeships and traineeships for your organisation, choices related to 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 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. No one is ever too old to start an apprenticeship. 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 Jobactive 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 GTO, allowing each business to provide part-time work. There is also the opportunity to employ a current school student as a school-based trainee.

In addition, 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 ANP representative to visit your organisation to complete an apprenticeship or traineeship Training Contract with you and your proposed apprentice or trainee.

## Step 4 Sign-up

At this stage the ANP 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 also 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 (TPP) is also completed at sign-up and is endorsed by the RTO. The TPP 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 ANP checks the Training Contract and TPP and lodges these with Training Services NSW 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. Training Services NSW 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 Training Services NSW Regional Centre 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
- Unsafe work practices
- Failure to follow supervisor's 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.

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 Training Services NSW for cancellation of the Training Contract.



## Assistance from Training Services NSW

Training Services NSW 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.

The aim is to provide impartial advice that helps to get the training program back on track. Employers, apprentices and trainees may speak to a Training Services NSW Training Advisor on a confidential basis if they wish.

### **You should contact Training Services NSW 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 Training Services NSW 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 the parties do not agree, Training Services NSW 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 Training Services NSW Training Advisor may refer the matter to the Commissioner for Vocational Training for resolution.

The Commissioner will conduct an administrative review and may convene a hearing to:

- Effect a settlement that is acceptable to all parties
- Make a determination if an acceptable settlement can not be reached.

The Commissioner has authority under the *NSW Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001* to make a determination that binds both the employer and the apprentice or trainee.

# Training Services NSW regional centres

## Central and Northern Sydney

Level 13, 67 Albert Avenue  
Chatswood NSW 2067  
**Ph** (02) 9242 1700  
STS.Chatswood@industry.nsw.gov.au

## Southern Sydney

Level 2, 41-45 Rickard Road  
Bankstown NSW 2200  
**Ph** (02) 8707 9600  
TS.Bankstown@industry.nsw.gov.au

## Western Sydney and Blue Mountains

Ground Floor, 16-18 Wentworth Street  
Parramatta NSW 2150  
**Ph** (02) 9204 7400  
STS.Parramatta@industry.nsw.gov.au

## Hunter & Central Coast

Level 1, 117 Bull Street  
Newcastle West NSW 2302  
**Ph** (02) 4926 7300  
STS.Newcastle@industry.nsw.gov.au

## North Coast & Mid North Coast

Level 4, Suite 2, 29 Molesworth Street  
Lismore NSW 2480  
**Ph** (02) 6629 7900  
STS.Lismore@industry.nsw.gov.au

## New England

Level 2, Noel Park House  
155-157 Marius Street  
Tamworth NSW 2340  
**Ph** (02) 6763 3055  
STS.Tamworth@industry.nsw.gov.au

## Western NSW

161 Kite Street  
Locked Bag 21  
Orange NSW 2800  
**Ph** (02) 6363 9800  
STS.Orange@industry.nsw.gov.au

## Riverina

87 Forsyth Street  
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650  
**Ph** (02) 6937 7600  
STS.WaggaWagga@industry.nsw.gov.au

## Illawarra & South East NSW

Level 1, Block E State Office Block  
84 Crown Street  
Wollongong NSW 2500  
**Ph** (02) 4240 3700  
STS.Wollongong@industry.nsw.gov.au

## For more information

 13 28 11

 [www.training.nsw.gov.au](http://www.training.nsw.gov.au)

 [facebook.com/TrainingServicesNSW](https://facebook.com/TrainingServicesNSW)

 NSW Department of Industry