



## *Employing an Apprentice*

An apprentice is someone who combines work and study to obtain a trade qualification in their industry, for example as a carpenter, chef or hairdresser. An apprenticeship typically takes between one to four years to complete. Anyone who is old enough to work can be an apprentice and they do not need a secondary school certificate or any other qualification.

An apprentice must have a formal training contract with the relevant state or territory apprenticeship authority and regularly undertake training through a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), for example TAFE or other registered training provider.

Government support is available to help businesses employ an apprentice. This is a great way to increase the skill level of your workforce and nurture someone to fit the culture of your business.

You must have a suitably qualified supervisor to be responsible for the training and provide mentoring and practical on-the-job guidance.

### *Apprentice entitlements*

Apprentices receive the same entitlements as other employees, such as annual leave, sick leave, public holidays, and breaks. These entitlements are set out in the National Employment Standards and the award or agreement that applies to your business.

Apprentices usually receive special pay rates while they complete their qualification. This includes payment for all hours spent working at your business and/or attending formal training/trade school. You can only pay apprentice wages if you have a formal training contract with your apprentice that has been registered and recognised by a state or territory training authority. Apprentice wages are set out in the award or agreement that applies to your business.

Apprentice wages usually increase on 1 July each year and each time a milestone is reached in the apprenticeship. The award or agreement that applies to your business will state whether milestones are time based or competency based. Once the apprenticeship is completed and signed off by the RTO and the employer, the employee will be paid the tradesperson's pay rate.

Your apprentice will undertake training as part of their training contract and must be paid for this time. Off-the-job training is time spent in structured training delivered by an RTO. It is often delivered away from the workplace and referred to as trade school. It can sometimes be delivered at the worksite but does not include normal work duties. The apprentice's award will outline when you have to reimburse them (or you can choose to pay the RTO directly) for the cost of training fees and prescribed textbooks.

You must keep written time and wage records for each employee. This includes records about their employment details, pay, overtime, hours of work, leave, superannuation contributions, termination of employment, and agreements relating to an individual's employment (including individual flexibility agreements and guarantees of annual earnings). These records must be kept for at least seven years.

## Step by step guide

### 1. Register as an employer of apprentices

To make sure you and your apprentice are both set up for success, all employers are required to register with Skilled Careers (SC). To register you need to access the [Atlas Portal](#) and sign up as a new employer. You will need your ABN and Legal Name to register.

Employers in a licensed occupation must have the appropriate licence. The body corporate (e.g. a Pty Ltd company) must hold its own licence. Apprentices need to train under the supervision of qualified and experienced workers, so SC assess the credentials of the nominated supervisors (i.e. hairdressing supervisors need to provide evidence of successful completion of Certificate III in Hairdressing).

When submitting your application to SC, supporting evidence is important to assist with the assessment of your application. Where relevant, please include:

- Photo or video evidence of the workplace, equipment and machinery the apprentice will be working in or using,
- Relevant occupational license details,
- Certificates of Compliance (for registration in the electrical, plumbing and gas-fitting trades).

Once submitted, a representative from the Department for Innovation and Skills will call you to discuss your application and ensure you can provide the variety of work required. In some cases, they may also request an onsite meeting to see the proposed work environment as part of the assessment.

### 2. Find the right person

There are several options to find an apprentice, including:

- Advertising in the local media,
- Advertising with Jobactive,
- Contacting an Apprenticeship Network Provider,
- Through a Group Training Organisation, or
- An existing employee can transition to be an employee.

### 3. Select an Apprenticeship Network Provider

ANPs are contracted by the Australian Government to help employers with signing up to a training contract and advising whether they are eligible for any incentives. In South Australia there are two ANPs:

- [MEGT \(Australia\) Ltd](#)
- [MAS National](#)

### 4. Sign a training contract

Before starting an apprenticeship, all parties must sign a training contract. The contract will outline the rights and obligations that apply for the length of the training period. Your ANP will help prepare the training contract and other paperwork.

### 5. Select a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)

RTOs deliver qualifications and assess competencies against the training plan. Selecting an RTO should be done with your apprentice. Your ANP will provide advice and help you find the right RTO to deliver off-the-job training for your apprentice.

### 6. Prepare a training plan

The RTO, employer and apprentice must agree on a training plan. The RTO is responsible for the preparation of the training plan.

### 7. Seek contract approval

The Australian Government approve training contracts and training plans to ensure they meet all legal requirements. Your ANP will lodge the signed training contract on your behalf. Your RTO will lodge the training plan.

All discussions should be documented – no matter what form, a quick diary note is fine – to record the day/time/who was present/topic(s) of conversation/agreed actions. The employee should be given opportunity to have an advocate of their choice.

*Created by and for Solutions To Spec Pty Ltd, 2021.*

