

Supervising your trainee or apprentice

A South Australian guide for workplace supervisors



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Introduction

Well-trained and efficient 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 traineeship and apprenticeship programs.

Effective recruitment and ongoing support of trainees and apprentices through to successful completion ensures the availability of a pool of skilled workers to meet the business challenges of the future.

Workplace supervisors play a central role in the success of traineeship and apprenticeship programs. Recent studies show that the main reasons given by trainees and apprentices in their decision to leave or stay with Training Contracts are:

- the extent to which their choice of traineeship/apprenticeship meets their expectations
- general workplace conditions and relationships
- the extent to which they feel supported in the workplace
- low wages, particularly for apprentices in their first two years
- the extent to which the quality of training compensates for lower training wages.

By helping trainees and apprentices with these issues in the 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 trainees and apprentices.



Figure 1 - Supervisor instructing apprentice

Effective supervision will encourage more trainees and apprentices to complete their training, leading to:

- more productive workplaces
- higher quality output and services
- employees who can undertake a wider range of tasks.

The supervisor may also be the employer of the trainee/apprentice, especially in a smaller organisation. If you are the employer, or are authorised to act upon their behalf, you may have to periodically sign documentation relating to the trainee/apprentice. Most importantly, the supervisor is the person who is responsible for training the trainee/apprentice at the worksite in the day-to-day working environment.

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

This guide contains only general information about the traineeship and apprenticeship system in SA. If you are seeking more detailed information, please consult the booklet entitled *South Australia's Traineeship and Apprenticeship System*, which can be obtained by calling **1800 673 097** or by going to www.skills.sa.gov.au/apprentice-publications

This guide is also designed to be read alongside the *Guidelines for Persons who Supervise Apprentices or Trainees* (which came into effect in January 2011). The guidelines can be found at www.tasc.sa.gov.au

Regulation and Contract Management (RCM)

RCM is part of the State Government, and is responsible for managing the traineeship and apprenticeship system in South Australia. RCM provides assistance and information on all aspects of traineeships and apprenticeships.

RCM registers employers to employ and train trainees and/or apprentices, and ensures that trainees, apprentices and employers carry out their responsibilities under the Training Contract. RCM also administers travel and accommodation allowances for trainees and apprentices. RCM can provide advice in regard to the suspension, variation, extension or termination of a Training Contract.

You can contact RCM by calling **1800 673 097** or visit www.skills.sa.gov.au/apprentices

Traineeships and apprenticeships

This guide has been written specifically for you, the workplace supervisor of trainees and/or apprentices. Traineeships and apprenticeships are jobs that combine work, structured training and formal assessment. They lead to an Australian Qualifications Framework certificate, awarded by a registered training organisation (RTO), and a Trade Certificate awarded by Regulation and Contract Management (RCM) for a completed apprenticeship, or a letter for a completed traineeship.

In SA, the employer and the trainee/apprentice enter into a formal Training Contract that sets out the rights, responsibilities and obligations of both parties for the period of the contract. The Training Contract is registered with RCM and undergoes an assessment process to ensure it meets legislative requirements.

Traineeships and apprenticeships are available for new and existing employees of any age or length of service. There is also the option for students to undertake a school-based traineeship/apprenticeship in selected vocations (non-trade occupations) and trades while at school.

Registered training organisations, known as RTOs, play the crucial role in providing the course of training to your trainee/apprentice. There are more than 200 RTOs in SA, including TAFE and many private sector organisations. Depending on the trade or vocation, the employer and trainee/apprentice can choose whether training is undertaken in the workplace, in the more traditional classroom setting, online, or a combination of these.

Whichever training delivery pathway is chosen, the employer must release the trainee/apprentice to undertake training and assessment, and pay the trainee/apprentice for that time in accordance with the relevant industrial agreement.

While Training Contracts have a nominal duration assigned at their commencement, the date of completion is flexible within the training period, and occurs when the employer certifies that the trainee/apprentice is competent and the RTO has issued the national qualification. An application can be made to extend the Training Contract if the trainee/apprentice has not achieved competency within the contract term.

The workplace supervisor

This part of the Guide looks at how you can optimise the learning opportunities of your trainee/apprentice by using good supervisory and coaching skills.

The workplace induction and ongoing support of your trainee/apprentice is normally the job of the workplace supervisor. You will answer any questions your trainee/apprentice may have regarding their training or other aspects of their work. It is your responsibility to inform your trainee/apprentice of what it means to work for the business, safety rules, codes of conduct, lunch breaks, work health and safety information, etc. Supervisors also ensure the trainee/apprentice is not harassed or bullied in the workplace.

The supervisor's role

As a supervisor you will act as a role model and coach to your trainee/apprentice. They will look to you for guidance and help in learning to do their job. You will need to organise and record the training activities undertaken in the workplace, as well as help to provide assessment evidence to the RTO assessor, if required. You will also assist your trainee/apprentice in gaining access to equipment and training as needed, or as required in the Training Plan.

Learning styles vary between individuals and between workplaces. For instance, some individuals learn best from written instructions, while others prefer practical demonstration. Training, whether delivered by the RTO or by you, will be easier and more effective if your trainee/apprentice's preference for a particular learning style can be recognised and accommodated.

An effective supervisor

- provides a safe and supportive workplace
- manages risks in relation to safety and production while training
- integrates learning tasks into work activities based on the Training Plan
- communicates with the RTO on a regular basis to ensure effective training delivery and assessment practices, and to review progress through the Training Plan
- advises the RTO that the trainee/apprentice has achieved competency in specific units of competency
- manages the trainee/apprentice's training needs and motivations
- helps the trainee/apprentice develop problem solving and general employability skills
- acts as a role model
- provides feedback and encouragement
- promotes independence and self-direction in learning.

What are the benefits of being a workplace supervisor?

While supervising your trainee/apprentice you will:

- have the satisfaction of passing on your skills and knowledge
- enjoy seeing your trainee/apprentice develop their skills
- develop and apply your own skills as a mentor and coach
- improve your communication skills as you explain work and answer questions
- develop staff who are able to complete delegated tasks, which enables you to complete other work

- have the opportunity to assist your trainee/apprentice in building work relationships, and to understand 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, you will participate in delivering structured on-the-job training to your trainee/apprentice, possibly with the help of the RTO.

Off-the-job training is delivered in the RTO's classroom, or at the workplace outside of normal work duties. You should help your trainee/apprentice to understand how the classroom instruction translates to the workplace. The same situation applies if your trainee/apprentice is receiving online training from the RTO, as they will still need your assistance to ensure this instruction translates to the workplace.

Training Plans

The RTO negotiates a Training Plan with the employer and the trainee/apprentice at the time of sign-up. The Training Plan should be tailored to individual business requirements. The Training Plan confirms the qualification to be delivered, the delivery pathway, and the timing of the training. A copy should be provided to the employer and trainee/apprentice. If the traineeship/apprenticeship is fully on-the-job (ie if the RTO will not be delivering training), then the RTO should mentor and coach you, as you would be responsible for delivering all training, while the RTO would be responsible for assessment.

Foster a positive attitude – mistakes should be looked on as a positive occurrence because they present an opportunity for learning. Traineeships and apprenticeships provide the opportunity to learn from mistakes in a safe working environment.

Some of the things you will do

The workplace supervisor

- explain your role to the trainee/apprentice
- give clear instructions on work tasks
- monitor progress towards completion
- introduce the trainee/apprentice to the workplace
- coach the trainee/apprentice to complete tasks
- liaise with the RTO, and advise when competency is achieved
- discuss the Training Plan with the trainee/apprentice
- provide encouragement and feedback
- ensure that proper record-keeping is maintained.

Once the traineeship/apprenticeship is underway, you should set regular meeting times with your trainee/apprentice to discuss training and work issues, ensure that the Training Plan is being followed, and confirm the competencies are being achieved. If your trainee/apprentice has only recently entered the workforce, you may need to meet with them more regularly to ensure that they receive any additional support as required.

The training record book, if issued, should be signed off as work tasks are completed and competencies are achieved. Remember that it is important to provide feedback to your trainee/apprentice, as it allows them to measure their progress, provides encouragement, and helps them gain confidence.

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

Introduction to the workplace

A good introduction to the workplace will enable your trainee/apprentice to build effective workplace relationships. A structured induction will leave the new trainee/apprentice 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 competency, reduce staff turnover, and lead to you better understanding the new trainee/apprentice's strengths and career aspirations.

If the induction is carried out by the workplace supervisor, you should cover:

- work health and safety procedures
- basic work rules and work conditions
- information on the organisation's policies and procedures and where to source them if required
- a tour of the workplace facilities
- an introduction to key personnel and immediate work colleagues
- a description of the business, its goals and strategies and how your trainee/apprentice fits into the overall picture
- terms of employment, including the Training Contract, the probationary period and award coverage or employment contract
- a review of the Training Plan, to clarify the competencies to be achieved
- method and time of wage payment
- leave provisions, including annual, sick and other leave
- grievance procedures, including who to contact and what to do.

If a generic induction is provided by someone outside your own work unit, you should ensure that the items in the above list that relate to training are covered, particularly a discussion of the Training Plan and the Training Contract. Each time the worksite or duties change, an induction should be given to your trainee/apprentice.

The probationary period

The probationary period starts on the same day as the Training Contract commences. The probationary period varies in length, depending upon the vocation/trade. Either the employer or trainee/apprentice may withdraw from the Training Contract if they provide written notice to the other party within the probationary period. It is recommended that the employer and trainee/apprentice try to resolve any apparent issues first before taking this step. The employer must provide written notification of a withdrawal to RCM within one week of the withdrawal.

First impressions count – a new trainee/apprentice'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 already be coaching others, even if you have not thought of it in these terms. Coaching includes all the efforts you make to motivate others, teach them about the work, develop their skills, provide them with feedback and recognise their achievements.

Effective coaching

The following are a few tips to assist you in coaching effectively:

- acknowledge what your trainee/apprentice already knows – they may have knowledge and experience that they have gained in a variety of ways, e.g. school, hobbies, previous employment
- explain the 'big picture' – give the 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 – explain what your trainee/apprentice will achieve
- provide choice – everyone learns differently, so find out from your trainee/apprentice how they like to learn, e.g. do they prefer written instructions or to be shown how to do something a number of times?
- remember that where skills are being learned, you will need to give your trainee/apprentice the opportunity to practice
- encourage initiative and innovative thought by listening to your trainee/apprentice's ideas and providing feedback
- communicate with your trainee/apprentice, and think about:
 - how and how often you are going to communicate with them
 - whether your instructions are clear and simple, and are not more complex than necessary for the job
 - how you are going to ensure a two-way communication flow
- check whether you have realistic expectations
- remember that people work and learn best in a supportive environment, so make sure that you act immediately against any bullying or harassment you see.

People learn best when they are not tense - so don't mix instructions with criticism

Six steps to effective supervisor coaching

1. explain the task to the trainee/apprentice, its purpose, and why you do it
2. explain 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 trainee/apprentice with sufficient opportunity to practice, and observe their progress
5. provide encouragement, feedback, and maintain effective communication with the RTO. This includes advising the RTO when specific competencies have been achieved on-the-job
6. Help the trainee/apprentice complete the forms required to sign them off and formally complete their traineeship/apprenticeship. The employer will be required to sign the forms.

Supervision practical tips

People learn best when actively involved in their learning, so when teaching your trainee/apprentice 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
- identify risks and include safe work practices in your instructions
- ask your trainee/apprentice to re-state the instructions back to you to check their understanding
- make sure there are no distractions.

Demonstration

Take time to show your trainee/apprentice how to do things the correct way. You may find it helps to break the task down into manageable pieces. Observation is a quick and very effective way to learn, as it allows you to:

- show your trainee/apprentice correct procedures and sequences
- explain why the task is done that way
- use correct work practices.

Practice makes perfect

Allow time for your trainee/apprentice to practice new skills. Everyone makes mistakes, so expect them. Point your trainee/apprentice in the right direction.

While they are practicing:

- be patient
- ask questions to encourage your trainee/apprentice 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, 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 your trainee/apprentice in decision making, e.g. "Should we set the guide rails now?"
- obtain information and feedback, e.g. "How is your training in using power tools going? Is there anything you don't understand?"

What are workplace competencies?

A traineeship/apprenticeship is made up of training and assessments to develop a number of competencies - sets of skills and knowledge relevant to the workplace, and the level of performance required to do them satisfactorily at work. For all traineeships and apprenticeships, the training and assessment outcomes are achieved through assessments and assignments, and by completing actual work 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 a traineeship/apprenticeship, your trainee/apprentice must successfully complete all of the units of competency that make up the National Qualification.

What is assessment?

Assessment involves collecting evidence about your trainee/apprentice's skills and knowledge, comparing the evidence to a set of industry-based standards and judging whether, on the basis of the evidence gathered, your trainee/apprentice meets those standards. The RTO assessor will carry out the assessment in consultation with you and your trainee/apprentice. This will mean determining whether your trainee/apprentice is 'competent' or 'not yet competent' (some RTOs use different terms).

Variation of Training Contract

If there is a change of circumstances (such as a change of qualification, change of hours of employment, etc), then the employer and trainee/apprentice will need to apply for a variation of the Training Contract. All variation applications must be mutually agreed by all parties involved and forwarded to RCM for assessment. If you need to apply for a variation, call RCM first to be advised of the process involved.

Constant lecturing will make your trainee/apprentice tune out. Often people learn more when given a chance to try something themselves.

Assessment of competency

As a workplace supervisor, you will be in a position to provide advice to the RTO on how your trainee/apprentice has applied their learning and skills in the workplace, and your opinion about their ability to do the job.

Working with your RTO

At the start of the Training Contract, you will receive a copy of the Training Plan, which will describe the training that the RTO will be providing, and the RTO's contact details. You should:

- contact the RTO so you and your trainee/apprentice can discuss the training provided by the RTO
- ensure your RTO offers recognition of prior learning (RPL) and, where possible, assist your trainee/apprentice to provide evidence for an RPL application
- work with the RTO to plan how you will link training delivered by the RTO to the workplace training you will be providing
- agree on how and when you will discuss your trainee/apprentice's progress and any issues that arise.

During the traineeship/apprenticeship we suggest that you:

- set aside regular times with your trainee/apprentice to discuss what they are doing with the RTO and how this can be applied in their work
- provide regular feedback to your trainee/apprentice about the progress you are expecting and/or seeing them make
- maintain regular contact with the RTO to make sure any problems are addressed early and to provide the best opportunity for the success of the traineeship/apprenticeship
- provide regular feedback to the employer (if this is not you) about your trainee/apprentice's progress.

At the completion of the nominated term of the traineeship/apprenticeship, you will need to:

- provide an opinion on whether your trainee/apprentice is competent in their vocation/trade
- work with your trainee/apprentice and the RTO to apply for a successful completion of the Training Contract, if they both agree your trainee/apprentice is competent.

Early completion

An early completion gives your trainee/apprentice the opportunity to complete their Training Contract prior to the nominal completion date on the Training Contract. This is dependent on their being declared competent in the workplace and having received their National Qualification from the RTO, as well as both parties consenting to the early completion. An application for early completion is then submitted to RCM.

School-based arrangements

If your trainee/apprentice is on a school-based traineeship/apprenticeship, you will also need to include the school in some of the discussions and communication. Below are some guidelines for dealing with the school:

- ensure the school agrees to the planned training times and hours of employment. As the student is still in school, it is important they are able to meet the requirements of their secondary studies. Changes to the training times may have an impact on the completion of their SACE

- include the school in discussions on any changes or issues which may jeopardise the successful completion of the Training Contract. Many students will require the points they receive for completion of the traineeship/apprenticeship qualification to achieve their SACE
- advise the school when your trainee/apprentice successfully completes their Training Contract, as this may impact on their study arrangements.

“Kids these days just don’t want to learn” – not so, but younger trainees and apprentices are both smart and impressionable. They will pick up whatever good or bad attitudes and work practices that are shown to them by other workers. Given the right role models, they will come out on top.

Is it my concern what the trainee/apprentice does outside working hours?

An aspect of supervision to think about is that you can assist the trainee/apprentice with constructive advice and guidance on some non-work issues which, if left unchecked, could potentially impact negatively on their employment and training. For example, the need to have adequate sleep and to avoid alcohol and drugs, so that they can arrive at work clear headed and energetic, may need to be discussed.

Another significant issue, especially for young people, is responsible road behaviour. The serious road accident rate for drivers aged 17 to 24 is more than double that of other drivers, with alcohol and speed being major contributing factors. Encouraging good driving habits in your trainee/apprentice will not only help them to avoid serious financial penalties and possible serious or fatal injury, but also help them to retain their licence and vehicle, which may be essential to their continuing employment.

What it means for your trainee/apprentice to be competent

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

A trainee/apprentice 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, 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, technology, learning, and taking initiative.

Being competent means

- knowing how to do a job
- being able to assist others who need training, once qualified
- understanding workplace policies and procedures
- dealing with everyday problems that may occur
- being responsible once qualified
- being able to transfer skills to different situations
- being able to apply skills consistently
- being able to do different tasks at the same time

Completion of the Training Contract

Your trainee/apprentice will have a nominal completion date for their Training Contract. They must either apply for a completion of their Training Contract effective as of this date, or apply for a completion of their Training Contract effective before this date (i.e. an early completion).

If they are unlikely to complete before this date, they may need to contact RCM and discuss whether to apply for an extension. For RCM to approve a completion, all competencies indicated on the Training Plan must have been achieved, and all parties **must** agree that the trainee/apprentice is competent.

How does the supervisor help with record-keeping?

Certain records must be maintained by various parties to confirm that effective training is occurring. Who maintains some of these may vary, however, depending on your workplace requirements. The records that need to be kept are:

- Training Contract and Training Plan
- letter of appointment (where required under the relevant industrial arrangement)
- induction records
- on-the-job training and competency assessment records
- records that identify the type of work performed by your trainee/apprentice, e.g. certificates of compliance in relation to work performed by apprentices (in electrical, plumbing, gas fitting or any other trade where a certificate of compliance is required to be issued for work done), profiling records, job log books or job journals
- disciplinary records
- time records for each day while at work or training (including start/finish work, meal and other break times)
- time records for the persons responsible for supervising your trainee/apprentice for each day at work (including start/finish work times, meal and other break times)
- pay and entitlement-related records, including superannuation records
- leave records (e.g. personal, carer, annual leave)
- records pertaining to the qualification and evidence of skills of persons supervising a trainee/apprentice
- business licences or worker registration or contractors' licences
- records confirming compliance with Industrial Relations Commission orders.

Scenario 1 – John employs and trains Justin, a third year electrical apprentice. Justin applies for and takes a week's carer's leave to look after his father, for whom he has documented carer responsibilities. Does John need to keep the leave records and the documents relating to Justin's responsibility as a carer?

Answer - Yes. During the life of the Training Contract, John must keep all the documents as listed. When the Training Contract expires in 14 months' time, John must keep those records for a further seven years.

Scenario 2 – Melissa is an apprentice whose employer sells the business to another person, who then becomes Melissa's employer. What records does the old employer need to keep?

Answer – The 'old' employer must copy the records relating to the Training Contract and deliver these to the 'new' employer. The 'old' employer must keep the originals for seven years from the expected expiration of the Training Contract.

Supervision requirements

| Traineeships | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Year/stage of traineeship | Minimum number of supervisors to trainees |
| Any | 1:5 |

Figure 2 - Supervision ratio requirements for trainees

| Apprenticeships | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Year/stage of apprenticeship | Minimum number of supervisors to apprentices |
| 1 or 2 | 1:1 |
| 3 or 4 | Appropriate level of supervision to be determined by the employer (must not be less than 1 supervisor to 5 apprentices) |

Figure 3 - Supervision ratio requirements for apprentices

The supervision ratios displayed above were introduced on 1 January 2010 for all South Australian traineeships and apprenticeships, and apply regardless of the industrial award or agreement under which your trainee/apprentice is employed. To provide effective supervision, you should remain in line of sight and earshot of your trainee/apprentice. Apprentices in their first or second year/stage require direct 1:1 supervision.

The appropriate level of supervision for the employment and workplace training of a trainee, or an apprentice in their third or fourth year/stage, is to be determined by the employer, based on:

- any accepted industry supervision standards
- the level of competence and experience of each individual trainee/apprentice in a particular task or skill
- the risk associated with the worksite and the type of work in which your trainee/apprentice is engaged.

While trainees and apprentices may act as mentors, they must not be responsible for supervising other trainees/apprentices. Many people on the worksite may mentor and support your trainee/apprentice, but supervisors play a special role by providing training.

Supervision combinations

The maximum number of trainees and apprentices that one supervisor may supervise is five. If you are responsible for providing direct supervision to a first or second year/stage apprentice, you may also provide general supervision to any combination of up to four trainees or third or fourth year/stage apprentices.

What if I have a problem?

General workplace issues

Depending upon your workplace, as the workplace supervisor of a trainee/apprentice, you will have access to support from your employer and possibly other supervisors at your workplace, who may have been trainees/apprentices themselves in the past.

You should discuss any concerns you have about your trainee/apprentice with them as soon as possible, and try to resolve those issues. This gives your trainee/apprentice a chance to respond, and if necessary, improve performance. It also makes it more likely that working relationships and the Training Contract can be maintained. If an issue cannot be resolved, either of the parties may contact RCM on **1800 673 097** for assistance.

If an issue cannot be resolved in the workplace with advice provided by RCM, you or your trainee/apprentice may contact the SA Employment Tribunal (SAET), which handles all grievances and disputes relating to Training Contracts. You can contact them on **8207 0999**, or visit <http://www.saet.sa.gov.au/>

A trainee/apprentice employed under a modern award or agreement, or their employer, may also use the Dispute Resolution provisions in that modern award or agreement. Go to the Fair Work Commission website www.fwc.gov.au for more information.

On the other hand, you or your trainee/apprentice can contact the Training Advocate. Among other services, they can provide assistance to resolve any matters arising from the training system. You can contact them on **1800 006 488**, or visit www.trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au

More information can be found in the section 'Grievances and Disputes', in the publication *South Australia's Traineeship and Apprenticeship System*, which can be obtained by calling **1800 673 097** or by visiting www.skills.sa.gov.au/apprentice-publications

When any significant problem arises, it is a good idea to give advance notice to the trainee/apprentice that you want to discuss it with them - that way both parties have a chance to think over the problem and to manage any strong emotions that may be present.

Training Contract

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

- experiencing difficulties with your RTO which you cannot resolve
- experiencing difficulties in the workplace
- concerned that the Training Contract is not staying on schedule
- considering applying for a variation of the Training Contract.

contact Regulation and Contract Management by calling 1800 673 097 or visit www.skills.sa.gov.au/apprentices

Training Plan

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

If all the training is delivered on-the-job, the RTO may mentor and coach you to provide training in the workplace, and will be responsible for assessing the competence of your trainee/apprentice.



Figure 4 – An apprentice receiving instruction from a supervisor

What are the roles and responsibilities of those involved?

The employer

Traineeships and apprenticeships start with the employer. When an employer decides to employ a trainee/apprentice, they need to contact RCM to register their business. Once the employer has selected a suitable trainee/apprentice, they can then contact an Apprenticeship Network Provider to arrange the signing of a Training Contract and other necessary paperwork. Employers have a range of responsibilities, including providing a workplace where learning can occur, and ensuring that the trainee/apprentice has every opportunity to complete their training. Furthermore, they must keep RCM informed of any changes to the Training Contract or if the successful completion of the Training Contract is in jeopardy. The employer should manage their trainee/apprentice's performance, while recognising they are learning how to perform the job.

The trainee/apprentice

The role of the trainee/apprentice is to undertake the course of training listed in the Training Contract and carry out all lawful instructions of the employer. It is the responsibility of the trainee/apprentice to work with the employer and RTO to acquire the skills of the vocation/trade and obtain the appropriate qualification as shown on the Training Plan. The trainee/apprentice must contribute to maintaining a safe and supportive workplace.

The Apprenticeship Network Provider (ANP)

ANPs have the role of promoting traineeships and apprenticeships, and will help establish the Training Contract with your trainee/apprentice. The Training Contract is then lodged with RCM for assessment. The ANP will explain the rights and responsibilities of those involved at the time of sign up, and advise you of any incentives that may be available. ANPs are contracted by the Australian Government to provide a free service to both you and your trainee/apprentice. In addition to preparing Training Contracts, they may contact you and your trainee/apprentice at designated times to ensure that training is progressing satisfactorily.

The registered training organisation (RTO)

The RTO delivers training to your trainee/apprentice leading to a nationally accredited qualification. It is the RTO's responsibility to develop and sign off a Training Plan with the employer and trainee/apprentice, and to deliver training according to the Training Plan. The RTO may provide resources to you and your trainee/apprentice, which will effectively support the training delivery pathway selected, and the agreed role you and the RTO will play in training delivery and assessment.

The group training organisation (GTO)

A GTO employs a trainee/apprentice and places them with a host business, under a written agreement, for their workplace training. The GTO has all the responsibilities of a normal employer, except in most cases they do not provide workplace training. They do, however, organise off-the-job training for the trainee/apprentice. The GTO is responsible for organising wages, payroll records, superannuation, and workers compensation. It is the responsibility of the GTO to provide ongoing support both to the host business and the trainee/apprentice to ensure that employment and training is progressing satisfactorily. If the host business is no longer able to provide sufficient workplace training, the GTO should rotate the trainee/apprentice to another host business.

The host business

A host business provides workplace training for a trainee/apprentice, who is employed by an organisation that employs trainees/apprentices under a hosting arrangement (such as a GTO or a labour hire firm). The host business has similar responsibilities to a normal employer, such as providing a workplace where learning can occur.

The key difference is that the GTO is responsible for managing the ongoing employment of the trainee/apprentice. The written agreement with the GTO will clearly outline all of the roles and responsibilities of the host business. The host business is required to consult with the GTO to determine whether competency is achieved by the trainee/apprentice in a task or skill.

More information

For more information on roles and responsibilities, please consult the publication *South Australia's Traineeship and Apprenticeship System*, which can be obtained by calling **1800 673 097** or by going to www.skills.sa.gov.au/apprentices



Figure 5 - An apprentice receiving instruction from a supervisor

Resources for Supervisors

General information on traineeships and apprenticeships is available on the internet, and the websites listed below 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.skills.sa.gov.au/apprentices
- www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au

The SA Training and Skills Commission website is located at www.tasc.sa.gov.au, where you will find the *Guidelines for Persons who Supervise Apprentices or Trainees*.

Useful publications

- the booklet entitled *South Australia's Traineeship and Apprenticeship System*, a copy of which can be found at www.skills.sa.gov.au/apprentice-publications
- the Fair Work Commission has information on workplace legislation and rates of pay at www.fwc.gov.au
- SafeWork SA has information on occupational health and safety legislative requirements available at www.safework.sa.gov.au
- Australian Industry Group Training Services has developed *A Guide to Managing the First 100 Days of an Apprenticeship*, a copy of which can be found at www.aigroupapprentices.com.au/employers/managing-apprentices
- the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry has published *Worth Their Weight in Gold – Practical Strategies for Engaging & Retaining Disengaged Apprentices* and a number of relevant case studies at www.acci.asn.au/issues-papers. *A Systematic Approach to Retaining Apprentices* is another useful publication provided at the same website.

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

Glossary

Assessment

The process of gathering and examining evidence in order to determine whether the trainee/apprentice has achieved a set standard or objective. This process may include a range of written, oral, and practical methods.

Competency

The ability to perform a task or set of skills repeatedly, against the standard of performance expected in the workplace and across industry. This includes the demonstration and application of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes as required.

Competency-based completion

The completion of a Training Contract once competency is achieved in both the workplace and in the formal training delivered by the registered training organisation (RTO), for each skill and unit of competence. This requires the employer to declare that the trainee/apprentice is competent in the workplace, and the RTO to issue the national qualification.

Direct supervision

The provision of personal supervision, which requires staying within constant visual contact and/or earshot. This cannot be provided by electronic means. Direct supervision is mandatory for first and second year/stage apprentices.

Employability skills

Skills such as communication, team work, problem solving, self-management, planning and organising, technology, learning, and taking initiative.

General supervision

The provision of supervision on a level deemed appropriate by the employer. This is based upon accepted industry supervision standards, the level of competence and experience of the trainee/apprentice in a task or skill, and the risk associated with any particular worksite and task. General supervision is applicable to trainees, and third and fourth year/stage apprentices.

Nominal completion date

The estimated completion date for a Training Contract, based upon the standard time required to complete a Training Contract for a particular vocation or trade.

Off-the-job training

Training provided directly by the RTO. It takes place either in the employer's training facilities, or off-site at the RTO's facilities. In each case the trainee/apprentice will be away from the normal work environment. The employer must confirm that the required competencies are achieved in the workplace. The employer will still provide workplace training as required under the Training Contract.

On-the-job training

Training delivered by the employer in the workplace. The RTO, in conjunction with the employer, will assess the competence of the trainee/apprentice.

Parties to a Training Contract

The parties to a Training Contract include the employer and trainee/apprentice, and the parent or guardian if the trainee/apprentice is aged under 18.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

The acknowledgement of a trainee/apprentice's skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, work, or life experience. A trainee/apprentice possessing some of the skills and/or knowledge taught in the course may be granted credit for all or part of their qualification.

SACE

The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) is a qualification awarded by the SACE Board to all students who successfully complete their secondary education in South Australia.

Supervisor

A person who is either qualified in the vocation or trade, or has an appropriate level of relevant industry experience. The supervisor must be competent in the relevant vocation or trade. A supervisor should be familiar with the level of supervision required, having regard to the individual circumstances of each case, and their responsibilities towards the trainee/apprentice. The supervisor may also be the employer of the trainee/apprentice, particularly in a small business.

Training Contract

A legally binding agreement between a registered employer and a trainee/apprentice, which specifies the obligations for the parties involved. The employer agrees in the Training Contract to employ and train the trainee/apprentice for a particular vocation or trade while they study for a nationally accredited qualification.

Training delivery pathway

The method by which a trainee/apprentice receives their training under a Training Contract, through off-the-job or fully on-the-job training delivered by the employer. The RTO may deliver training in the workplace, in a more traditional classroom setting, online, or a combination of these.

Training Plan

A documented program of training and assessment which confirms the qualification to be delivered, including the core and elective units of competency, and the training delivery pathway. It is developed by the RTO with the parties to the Training Contract at the time of sign-up.

Notes

Regulation and Contract Management

For all general enquiries:

1800 673 097 (Monday - Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm)

Fax: (08) 8463 5654

Email: dsd.tas@sa.gov.au

Regulation and Contract Management

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Adelaide SA 5001

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Supervising your Apprentice or Trainee

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