

# A Smart Move

An employer's guide to commencing  
and completing apprentices



Produced for you by  
**AMA Apprenticeship & Traineeship Services**

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# Foreword

Whether you are thinking of taking on an apprentice, are in the process of finding the right apprentice for your business or already have apprentices working for you, we hope you find the information in this booklet useful. AMA Apprenticeship and Traineeship Services has prepared this resource to simplify what we know can be a complicated and confusing system.

Inside you will find some concrete, accessible and useful tips on how to get started, how to get the most out of the system, and how to make an apprenticeship work for your business.

We know you are busy, so at the start of the booklet we have a set of quick, no-fuss resources for those of you that have found an apprentice and are ready to get going. They let you know what to do, and who can help you to do it. There is a checklist for getting started, a flow chart showing you how three key steps can get you on your way, a set of frequently asked questions and an Issues and Queries guide for finding the right number quickly.

The rest of this booklet gives you more comprehensive information on these and other processes, in case you have questions or want to know the system in a bit more detail.

**Note: If you have already found your apprentice you may want to check out the resources at the front then skip straight to Part 3.**

- **Part 1** gives some information for employers considering whether or not to take on an apprentice.
- **Part 2** discusses options for recruiting an apprentice.
- **Part 3** goes through the necessary steps to set up the apprenticeship.
- **Part 4** gives you some tips on how to maximise the usefulness of the apprenticeship for your business.
- **Part 5** covers the conclusion of the apprenticeship.

## **A quick word on terms used:**

For the sake of simplicity we have used the term “apprentice” throughout this booklet. However, most of the information presented is equally applicable and relevant to trainees.



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## Definitions

- **AAC:** Australian Apprenticeships Centres like AMA Apprenticeship and Traineeship Services help employers and apprentices to complete the training contract that commences the apprenticeship. AAC's also lodge training contracts for registration, disburse Federal Government incentives and monitor the progress of the apprenticeship at regular intervals.
- **Award:** an industrial award is a set of rules (normally for a particular industry or occupation) that outlines conditions of employment including minimum wage.
- **ApprentiCentre:** a State Government authority within the Department of Training and Workforce Development. ApprentiCentre is responsible for regulating the apprenticeship system in Western Australia and its approval is required for registration, variation and termination of all training contracts.
- **ATO:** The Australian Tax Office is the Federal Government's taxation authority. Among its functions, the ATO collects income tax and regulates the superannuation system.
- **Fair Work Infoline:** an information service run by the Federal Government's Fair Work Ombusman that provides information free of charge on awards, minimum wages and other conditions of employment.



## Definitions

- **GTO:** Group Training Organisations allow you to ‘host’ the apprentice without being the direct employer. This reduces your administrative burden and often allows you to take on the apprentice for a shorter amount of time. The benefits you receive from using a GTO result in slightly higher wage costs.
- **Minimum wage:** the lowest wage you are legally allowed to pay your apprentice. Minimum wages for apprentices are nearly always found in an award.
- **Off the job training:** training and assessment done by TAFE and private RTOs outside of the workplace.
- **On the job training:** training and assessment carried out by you, the employer, within the workplace.
- **RTO:** Registered Training Organisations such as TAFE and other private training providers conduct off the job training for apprentices.
- **Training Plan:** a document produced between the employer, the apprentice and the RTO. The plan maps out how and when the apprentice achieves the competencies necessary to complete the qualification.
- **Wageline:** a State Government authority within the Department of Commerce that provides information free of charge on minimum wages and other conditions of employment.

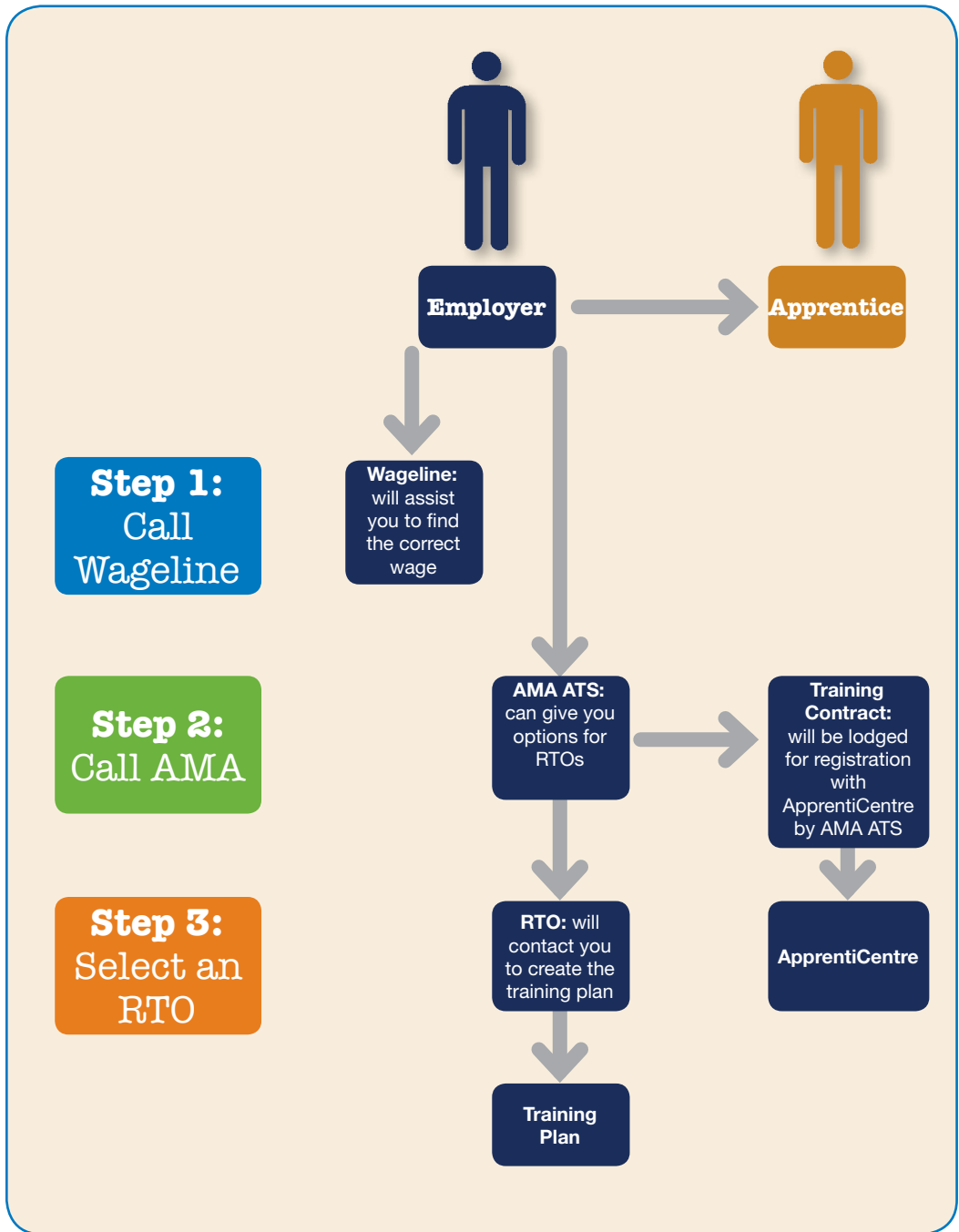


# Getting Started Checklist



Getting Started Checklist			
WHAT	HOW	WHO	
<b>Wages</b>	Call Wageline or the Fair Work Infoline to find out the correct wage to pay your apprentice.	Wageline 1300 655 266  Fair Work 13 13 94	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Training Contract</b>	Call AMA Apprenticeship and Traineeship Services to arrange for a consultant to come out and sign you and the apprentice on to the training contract.	AMA ATS 9273 3042	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>RTO</b>	Discuss with your AMA consultant what RTO options are available. Select an RTO with your apprentice.	AMA ATS 9273 3042	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Training Plan</b>	After registration of the training contract, the RTO will contact you to arrange the set up of the training plan.	TAFE or private RTO	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Industrial Law Obligations</b>	Get up to date with conditions of employment such as holiday pay and sick pay, as well as administrative obligations like record keeping and issuing payslips.	Wageline 1300 655 266  Fair Work 13 13 94	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>OSH</b>	Ensure you have a workplace that complies with Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) requirements both generally and for your industry.	WorkSafe 1300 307 877	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Workers' Compensation</b>	Set up workers' compensation insurance and an injury management plan.	WorkCover 1300 794 744	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Tax and Superannuation Obligations</b>	Call the Australian Tax Office (ATO) for information regarding superannuation and income tax payments.	ATO 13 28 66	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Induction process</b>	Introduce your apprentice to your workplace with an induction process.		<input type="checkbox"/>

# Getting Started Flow Chart



# Contact Numbers for Issues & Queries



Issues and Queries Guide		
Income tax	Any enquiries with regard to income tax (PAYG) withholding	ATO
	<a href="http://www.ato.gov.au/businesses">http://www.ato.gov.au/businesses</a>	13 28 66
Super	Superannuation enquiries	ATO
	<a href="http://www.ato.gov.au/super">www.ato.gov.au/super</a>	13 28 66
Payroll tax	Payroll tax is collected by the Western Australian Office of State Revenue	OSR
	<a href="http://www.osr.wa.gov.au">www.osr.wa.gov.au</a>	9262 1300
Training Contract	Variations to the training arrangement or contract, mediation, cancellations, suspensions etc	ApprentiCentre 13 19 54
Misconduct	Disciplinary issues, serious misconduct  <a href="http://www.trainingwa.wa.gov.au/apprenticentre">www.trainingwa.wa.gov.au/apprenticentre</a>	
Incentive payments	Enquiries about incentives and incentive eligibility	AMA ATS
	<a href="http://www.amaats.com.au">www.amaats.com.au</a>	9273 3042
Wages	Minimum wages, increases in minimum wages due to progression or minimum wage order	Wageline 1300 655 266
Conditions of Employment	Enquiries about annual leave, sick leave, parental leave, hours of work, overtime	Fair Work 13 13 94
Award	Finding out which award applies to your apprentice Payment of training fee enquiries Payment of tool allowance enquiries	
	<a href="http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/labourrelations">www.commerce.wa.gov.au/labourrelations</a> <a href="http://www.fairwork.gov.au">www.fairwork.gov.au</a>	
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health enquiries	WorkSafe
	<a href="http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/WorkSafe">www.commerce.wa.gov.au/WorkSafe</a>	1300 307 877
Workers Comp	Workers' compensation insurance enquiries	WorkCover
	<a href="http://www.workcover.wa.gov.au">www.workcover.wa.gov.au</a>	1300 794 744
Job Advertising	You can advertise a position for free on the government's jobsearch website and ApprentiCentre's Jobs Board	ApprentiCentre 13 19 54
	<a href="http://www.jobsearch.gov.au">www.jobsearch.gov.au</a>	
	<a href="http://www.apprenticentre.wa.gov.au">www.apprenticentre.wa.gov.au</a>	
Immigration	Queries on employing and sponsoring immigrant workers: Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)	DIAC
	<a href="http://www.immi.gov.au">www.immi.gov.au</a>	131 881
Industry Resources	Building and Construction resources	Construction Training Fund 9244 0100
	<a href="http://bcitf.org">http://bcitf.org</a> <a href="http://www.becomeabricklayer.com.au">www.becomeabricklayer.com.au</a> <a href="http://www.abbtfc.com.au">www.abbtfc.com.au</a>	
	Electricity Industry Licensing	
	<a href="http://www.energy.wa.gov.au">www.energy.wa.gov.au</a>	Office of Energy 9420 5600

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What do I pay my apprentice?

There is no single “apprentice wage” and the correct rate of pay depends on a number of factors. Call Wageline on 1300 655 266 for assistance in determining the appropriate wage for your apprentice. You may be referred to the Fair Work Infoline for assistance.



## How do I find the right award?

Wageline can help you determine the award that covers your apprentice. You may be referred to the Fair Work Infoline if you are covered by a Federal award.

## Do I have to pay my apprentice's training fees?

Some awards require you to reimburse your apprentice for their training fees if they demonstrate “satisfactory progress”. To determine if such a requirement is in the award covering your apprentice, call Wageline. You may be referred to the Fair Work Infoline if you are covered by a Federal Award.

## What is a tool allowance? Will I have to pay it?

A tool allowance is an additional weekly rate paid to an apprentice or other employee to compensate for the cost of tools. Sometimes a tool allowance doesn't need to be paid if you provide all the required tools. Whether or not you have to pay the tool allowance depends on the terms of the award covering your apprentice. Call Wageline for more information.

## What incentives will I receive?

Different incentives have different eligibility criteria. Call AMA Apprenticeship and Traineeship Services on 9273 3042. A consultant will be able to make an assessment of your eligibility for Federal Government incentives and provide information on other potential incentives. They will visit you at a time and place convenient to you, free of any charge.

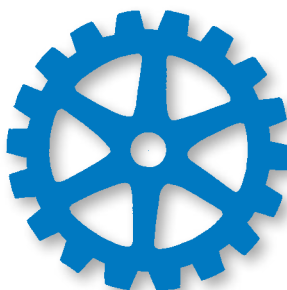
## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why is there Wageline and the Fair Work Infoline - what's the difference?**

You may be covered by a State Award or a Federal Award. Wageline is a State Government body and gives information on State Awards. The Fair Work Infoline is a Federal Government body and gives information on Federal Awards. Generally you will be covered by a State Award if you are a sole trader/partnership and a Federal Award if you are an incorporated business. If you are unsure it's not a problem, call Wageline and they will help you to determine if you're under a State or Federal Award.

### **I'm sick of having to call so many different places to get an answer!**

For a variety of reasons, the apprenticeship system in WA has a large number of organisations involved. Generally they have a specific role and can't go beyond the bounds of that role. The complexity of the system has been recognised by both levels of government and reforms are being considered to simplify the system further. In the meantime, you should feel free to call AMA Apprenticeship and Traineeship Services for an appropriate referral. We may not be able to give you an answer on the spot, but we should be able to point you in the right direction and save you wasting your time on frustrating phone calls.



## Part 1: Considering an apprentice

Businesses take on apprentices for a variety of different reasons; to help cope with increased demand, to plan for future skill and labour shortages, to help out a family member or friend, or just to give a person an opportunity to get ahead.

A well thought out apprenticeship arrangement can be a very rewarding experience professionally, personally and commercially for both employer and apprentice. However, to maximise these benefits you need to make sure that you select the right apprentice and the right arrangement for your business.

Apprenticeships are typically 3 – 4 years in length and represent a large commitment from both parties. Taking the time to get the arrangement right in the first place is a small investment for a big return.

### Can I support an apprentice?

Apprentices are a benefit and a commitment. Apprentices can provide quality additional labour for a reduced wage cost. Training an apprentice can also be a socially and personally beneficial exercise and contribute to staff morale. However, you must balance these benefits against your responsibility to provide quality training, adequate facilities, a range of work and a supportive work environment. You should also factor in the time the apprentice will be attending off the job training at TAFE or another training organisation.

If you are unsure of your business's capacity to meet the financial cost of an apprentice for the full length of the arrangement, you may want to consider using a Group Training Organisation (GTO). GTOs allow you to “host” the apprentice without being the direct employer. This reduces the administrative burden and often allows you to take on the apprentice for a shorter amount of time. Contact AMA Apprenticeship and Traineeship Services on 9273 3042 for more information on finding a GTO.



## Part 1: Considering an apprentice

### What type of apprentice do I need?

Apprenticeships come in all shapes and forms! An apprenticeship can be full time, part time or school based (around 8 hours per week). Apprentices themselves can be male or female, young or mature, and from a range of backgrounds.

In considering what type of apprenticeship arrangement you want, think about what your business needs and what support you can provide. Remember that while part time and school based apprentices are less of a time commitment over an ordinary week, the length of the apprenticeship will be increased as a result of the reduced weekly hours.

**There are a range of financial incentives available to employers and apprentices. Incentives are provided by a number of authorities and organisations...**

### What will an apprentice cost me?

Like all employees, there will be a minimum wage that applies to your apprentice. Because apprentices normally start out as unskilled and spend time undertaking off the job training, the minimum wages for apprentices are lower than those of qualified trades people. Apprentice wages are normally set out as a percentage of qualified tradesperson rates, and increase over time to reflect the increasing skills of the apprentice. If you choose to take on an apprentice you will need to contact the correct authority to determine their specific minimum wage. However, you can expect to pay around 40 – 60% of the qualified tradesperson's minimum wage in the first year, increasing to around 90% by the final year. Many awards provide a minimum for adult apprentices (most commonly defined as over 21 at commencement) which normally results in a higher first and second year rate.

### What about incentives?

There are a range of financial incentives available to employers and apprentices. Incentives are provided by a number of authorities and organisations, including the Federal Government, the State Government and industry groups. Incentives may take the form of cash grants, rebates or reduced tax liabilities.

## Part 1: Considering an apprentice

The incentives available and their eligibility criteria change from time to time. To get up to date information on incentives you may be eligible to receive, visit the AMA Apprenticeship and Traineeship Services website at [www.amaats.com.au](http://www.amaats.com.au) or call 9273 3042 and ask to speak to one of our consultants.

Visit the AMA Apprenticeship and Traineeship Services website at [www.amaats.com.au](http://www.amaats.com.au) or call 9273 3042 and ask to speak to one of our consultants about incentive eligibility.

### **I'm still a bit unsure - what if it doesn't work out?**

Of course it can be daunting to enter into a contract when you are not yet 100% sure about the suitability of the apprentice. Don't panic! All apprenticeships have a 1 – 3 month probationary period inserted into the contract.

This gives a good amount of time for both you and the apprentice to find out if the arrangement is going to be suitable for the full length of the apprenticeship. If you decide within the probationary period that the apprenticeship is not going to work out then you don't have to go ahead with it.



## Part 2: Recruiting the right apprentice

### I've decided I want an apprentice – where can I find one?

Congratulations! You're on the road to a rewarding experience that will enhance your business and provide a great opportunity to your chosen apprentice.

There are a number of things you need to do to get set up both practically and in terms of the law. We'll be able to talk you through all these steps one by one but before that you need to find the *right* apprentice for *your* business.



### Where do I find an apprentice?

You can use any of the normal processes you are familiar with for finding employees, and there are some places you can look specifically for apprentices. Some of your options for finding an apprentice include:

- Word of mouth
- Listing your vacancy on the ApprentiCentre Jobs Board at [www.apprenticentre.wa.gov.au](http://www.apprenticentre.wa.gov.au)
- Approaching a family member or friend
- Advertising in local papers
- Using online advertising services such as [www.seek.com](http://www.seek.com)
- Using a professional recruitment agency such as **AMARECruit**, [www.amarecruit.com.au](http://www.amarecruit.com.au)
- Using the Federal Government's **Job Services Australia** program at [www.jobsearch.gov.au](http://www.jobsearch.gov.au)
- Contacting a **local school** if you are considering a school based apprentice

## Part 2: Recruiting the right apprentice

Once you have figured out the best method for advertising the position, you are going to have to think about how you will assess the suitability of applicants, i.e. what recruitment tools you are going to use.

### **What's involved in recruitment?**

Recruitment is one of the most important tools you have to ensure a successful and productive apprenticeship. Good recruitment considers your vision for the future of your business and improves your productivity (and profitability!). Bad recruitment can result in thousands of dollars in wasted investment.

**Bad recruitment can result in thousands of dollars in wasted investment.**



## Part 2: Recruiting the right apprentice

Recruitment can be as simple or complicated as you would like to make it, however there are some basic techniques that have been proven to assist in ensuring a healthy and productive working relationship. Recruitment may involve any of the following:

- Deciding what the job is that you need done
- Identifying the skills and attributes the apprentice will need
- Setting out a job description
- Developing the job advertisement
- Advertising the job
- Reading written applications/expressions of interest
- Shortlisting candidates
- Interviewing
- Aptitude testing
- Conducting medical assessment/background checks
- Contacting referees
- Making the appointment



## Part 2: Recruiting the right apprentice

### **What about recruitment services?**

Some employers choose to contract a professional recruitment service to find the right employee. Professional recruitment costs you up front but saves you time and headaches down the track.

### **But I know who I want already!**

Even if you are setting up the arrangement because you have a specific person in mind, you should still conduct at least a basic interview process to make sure your intended apprentice understands their responsibilities and the commitment they are making.

**Professional recruitment costs you up front but saves you time and headaches down the track.**



## Part 3: Getting started

### I've found a potential apprentice, what do I do now?

To get started there are a few things you must do under the law and a few things that aren't legally required but are highly recommended for ensuring a successful apprenticeship. There are a number of authorities and organisations involved in the apprenticeship system and it can get a bit confusing at first.

We know how frustrating it is to get shuffled around and confused so if you get stuck, give us a call. If we can't help you on the spot we can refer you to the appropriate authority. You may wish to refer back to the "Getting Started Checklist" at the beginning of this booklet. We will go through the steps on the checklist one by one.

**There are a few things you must do under the law and a few things that aren't legally required but are highly recommended for ensuring a successful apprenticeship.**

### How do I find the correct wage?

All employees, including apprentices must be paid a minimum wage. The minimum wages for apprentices are most often found in industrial awards. Industrial awards are instruments setting out wages and conditions of employment for employees in particular industries and occupations. Your apprentice might be covered by a State Award or a Federal Modern Award, depending on which jurisdiction you are in (see over the page "Jurisdictions").

While it can get complicated very quickly, fortunately there is a lot of help available in this area. You should first call Wageline on 1300 655 266. Wageline is a State Government authority and can help you to find the correct wage if your business is covered by a State Award. If you aren't covered by a State Award, the Wageline staff will tell you and refer you on to the Fair Work Infoline (13 13 94) which is a Federal Government authority that can help you find the correct wage under a Federal Modern Award.



## Jurisdictions

Just to make things a little more complicated, Western Australia has two jurisdictions of employment law.

There are Federal laws and awards (The Federal system), and there are State laws and awards (the State system). Whether you are covered primarily by the Federal system or the State system depends on the legal nature of your business.

If you are incorporated you are probably in the Federal system. If you are a sole trader or a partnership you are probably in the State system.

It's worth knowing about the jurisdictions when you are finding out about the legal stuff but you don't need to worry too much, Wageline should be able to tell you which system you fall under with a quick phone call.



## Part 3: Getting started

### What's a training contract?

The first step in getting the apprenticeship up and running is to call AMA Apprenticeship and Traineeship Services on 9273 3042 to arrange for the training contract sign up. The training contract is a legally binding document that brings the apprenticeship into existence once registered by ApprentiCentre. It also contains the rights and obligations of both you and the apprentice. An AMA consultant will come to your workplace to explain the training contract, get you signed up and lodge the contract with ApprentiCentre. This service is funded by the Federal Government and won't cost you a thing.

### What's a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)?

RTO's are training organisations set up and registered to provide off the job training for apprentices. The biggest RTO is TAFE, but there are a number of private and industry organisations registered to provide training as well. An AMA consultant will be able to discuss the options with you and your apprentice so you can select the right RTO.

**RTO's are training organisations set up and registered to provide off the job training for apprentices.**

### What's a training plan?

Once you and the apprentice are signed up to the training contract, the RTO will contact you to arrange the training plan. This plan sets out how the training and assessment will be carried out over the course of the apprenticeship. Normally, a training plan is broken down to reflect when the apprentice will complete the required "competencies" of the apprenticeship. Many employers consider the training plan to be an afterthought to the training contract. Good businesses treat the creation of the training plan as an opportunity to integrate the apprentice's future into the organisation's business strategy.



## Part 3: Getting started

### What other legal stuff do I need to know?

If you've had employees before, you probably already know about superannuation, income tax, workers' compensation insurance, occupational safety and health (OSH) and minimum conditions of employment. Most of this applies to apprentices in the same way as for other employees. If you have not had employees before (remember that sub-contractors are not employees) then you will need to get these systems set up.

There are also some specific laws for employers of apprentices found in the *Vocational and Educational Training Act* and its regulations. This law pretty much covers the whole apprenticeship system and its regulation in WA, but the parts most relevant to employers are those that deal with the training contract and the training plan.

These parts cover issues such as completion, cancellation, variation and suspension for serious misconduct.

ApprentiCentre is the authority responsible for administering these rules so the best approach is to ask ApprentiCentre before you act.

Remember that when you have an apprentice, part of your OSH responsibilities include the provision of adequate supervision. Your award may also have rules on allowable ratios of trades people to apprentices. ApprentiCentre is responsible for regulating appropriate workplace ratios.

If you have a medium or large business, you may need to look into potential payroll tax obligations. The Western Australian Office of State Revenue (not the ATO) collects payroll tax and can give you further information.



## Part 3: Getting started

Fortunately there is help available online and over the phone for all these issues. **Consult the Issues and Queries Guide at the start of this booklet and give AMA ATS a call if you can't find the particular issue or organisation you are after.**

### Do I need an induction process?

An induction process makes sense for a number of reasons. Firstly, most (if not all) employers have obligations under OSH laws to keep employees safe and the beginning of employment is the most appropriate time to start safety training. You may also have other legal obligations such as providing the Fair Work information statement or offering a choice of funds for superannuation.

Regardless of legal obligations, it's a good idea to advise your apprentice of their minimum wage and basic conditions of employment, and to let them know the award that covers them. This gives the apprentice reassurance that you are meeting legal obligations and that their wage is fair.

An induction process also means that the apprentice is aware of communication channels and support mechanisms. This ensures that issues get dealt with before they become problems, and the apprentice feels confident in the workplace.

Finally, it is in the interests of the business to make sure that all new employees (and particularly apprentices) are aware of their responsibilities and obligations. Your apprentice has obligations to you, just as you have obligations to them. However it's difficult to complain about a breach of these obligations if you never inform your apprentice of what they are.



**An induction process also means that the apprentice is aware of communication channels and support mechanisms.**

## Part 4: Maximising your investment

The last thing you want is to invest your own time and your business's resources into training an apprentice who doesn't perform. Even worse is the situation where an apprentice leaves before completion, taking your investment and hard work with them.

One of the best ways to avoid this happening is to make sure you have an apprentice committed to your business, the apprenticeship and a career in the industry. A big part of achieving this comes from selecting the right apprentice in the first place, through a good recruitment process. However, there are also a number of things you can do during the course of the apprenticeship.

### How do I get the most out of my apprentice?

Here are a few tips and techniques you might want to consider, not just to prevent an apprentice from under-performing, but also to make a good apprentice even better:

- **Avoid isolation:** where possible, ensure the apprentice interacts with other staff members.
- **Treat the apprentice as an adult.** While the apprentice may be younger and not have the skills of a qualified tradesperson, they should still be treated as an equal and relevant member of the team.
- **Monitor the apprentice's relationships with other staff.** Bullying and harassment in your workplace is unproductive and damaging.



## Part 4: Maximising your investment

- Remember that an apprentice may be new to the industry or even to a working environment:
  - They may take longer to learn
  - They may need simpler instructions
  - They may be less likely to ask questions for fear of looking “stupid” or incompetent
- Treat inexperience as a positive: you have a blank slate to create a worker best suited for your business.
- Keep the apprentice motivated in his/her work:
  - Provide a diversity of work where you can.
  - Provide meaningful work and don't use the apprentice solely for menial and repetitive tasks.
  - Provide opportunities for the apprentice to do new work and develop new skills. This may require more direct supervision but results in a more useful and valuable employee.
  - Ask the apprentice if there is a type of work or particular skills they are interested in and accommodate this where you can.
  - Provide rewards for good work and increase the apprentice's responsibilities when they have earned it and are ready for it.
  - Link the work and the apprenticeship to a career.
- Consider a mentoring or buddy system



## Part 4: Maximising your investment

### What is mentoring?

Mentoring is the process of providing additional support to a less experienced worker to enhance their skills development and professional growth. Of course it's possible to transfer skills and expertise to an apprentice without these additional support systems. However, mentoring is sound business practice because it *maximises* the rate of skills development and *minimises* the chance of non-completion. Research has shown that a lack of support is a key reason for apprentices failing to complete their qualification.

A more complete approach to mentoring can also incorporate personal support for the apprentice, where it is appropriate and properly implemented.



### I'm a small business, I can't do that!

Of course, limited resources might mean you can't implement a comprehensive mentoring scheme. This doesn't mean you can't use the same principles within your capabilities or access free mentoring services outside your business.

Mentoring principles can be implemented using a number of different options including:

- **Assigning an in-house mentor**
  - A more experienced tradesperson works with and supports a less experienced worker to develop their skills and fosters professional growth under a structured program

**Mentoring is the process of providing additional support to a less experienced worker to enhance their skills development and professional growth.**

## Part 4: Maximising your investment

- **Using a buddy system**
  - A recently qualified tradesperson provides support and advice to an apprentice on an informal basis
- **Accessing professional mentor services**
  - Industry groups, government and AMA Apprenticeship & Traineeship Services are all potential sources of mentor services
  - Certain incentives may be currently available, or available in the future to help you develop or access mentoring programs

### What if problems arise?

While there's no reason why you should have problems with your apprentice, it's good to think about how you might deal with problems if they arise.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that problems are almost always easier to deal with the quicker they are addressed. This means you should make sure there are adequate supervision and communication systems in place to alert you to potential problems. Your apprentice should feel safe and comfortable in bringing problems to your attention.

It's also beneficial to have a pre-prepared resolution procedure you can use straight away if a problem arises.

If internal resolution procedures are unsuccessful you should call ApprentiCentre who can help to mediate between you and the apprentice for a mutually acceptable outcome.



## Part 5: Concluding or suspending the apprenticeship

Apprenticeships can end for a number of reasons. Hopefully the end of the apprenticeship occurs because of a successful completion and the achievement of the qualification.

However, unforeseen changes in circumstances for both the apprentice and the business can sometimes necessitate an early end.

In rare instances, the apprenticeship needs to be terminated due to serious misconduct on the part of the apprentice.

While early termination and misconduct should not be expected, it is good risk management practice to be informed on all the potential scenarios.

Probably the most important thing to keep in mind is that you cannot terminate the training contract without the approval of ApprentiCentre. This doesn't mean you are locked into the contract; however you must go through the appropriate processes.

### What if I can't afford to keep the apprentice on?

Generally, employers should avoid taking on apprentices or use a GTO where they are unlikely to be able to financially support the apprentice for the duration of the apprenticeship. However, where there is an unexpected and unforeseen downturn in business you can request that the training contract be terminated by ApprentiCentre. You may be required to provide some financial information demonstrating the business downturn.

Probably the most important thing to keep in mind is that you cannot terminate the training contract without the approval of ApprentiCentre.

## Part 5: Concluding or suspending the apprenticeship

### What if the apprentice decides to leave?

If the apprentice wishes to end the apprenticeship, you should consider internal resolution procedures and seek the assistance of ApprentiCentre for getting the apprenticeship back on track. In some situations, an apprentice cannot be convinced to stay. You cannot force an apprentice to continue if they genuinely wish to leave. Your best defence against an early exit is to make sure you get the right apprentice in the first place.

### How do I deal with serious misconduct?

Again, instances of serious misconduct are rare. However, if your apprentice engages in such conduct you do have the right to suspend them. Be aware however, that ApprentiCentre will expect to hear the apprentice's version of events before they take any action.

This means that the apprentice must be paid while on suspension, as the misconduct has not yet been assessed by a third party. Current regulations also state that you need to give the apprentice written notice of the reasons for suspension and provide a copy of this notice to ApprentiCentre before 5pm the following working day. Be aware that laws and regulations change from time to time. Wherever possible it is best to contact ApprentiCentre *before* you suspend the apprentice.

### Can I keep the apprentice at the end of the apprenticeship?

You are free to negotiate with the apprentice to continue employment as a qualified tradesperson. However, there is no obligation on the apprentice to stay after the end of the apprenticeship. Once the apprentice has completed, the training contract is concluded.



## Part 5: Concluding or suspending the apprenticeship

### Do I have to keep the apprentice at the end of the apprenticeship?

In the majority of circumstances there is no obligation to keep the apprentice on. When the training contract concludes, your employment obligation with the apprentice also finishes. The one exception to this general rule is the situation where the apprentice was a regular employee of your business before beginning the apprenticeship. In that situation it may be that the apprentice can expect to continue being employed, because they weren't employed by you solely for the purpose of doing the apprenticeship.



### What about the trade certificate?

At the conclusion of the apprenticeship, the apprentice will be issued a qualification. The certificate is documentary evidence that the qualification has been completed and in some circumstances is required for registration or licensing purposes. Qualifications are issued by RTOs. You or your apprentice should contact the RTO if you have questions about the issuing of the qualification.

### Do I need another apprentice?

Whether or not you keep the apprentice on, you may consider bringing a new apprentice on after the last one finishes. Many employers consider this to be an attractive option as they have now done the hard work of setting the business up to accommodate apprentices and can reap the benefits of a reduced wage bill without initial setup costs.

You may wish to refer back to Part 2 for some recruitment options if you are considering taking on another apprentice.

Whether or not you keep the apprentice on, you may consider bringing a new apprentice on after the last one finishes.

## I still have questions!

Where possible, we have tried to point you in the direction of the appropriate organisation to contact for the different stages of the apprenticeship process.

However, it's likely that issues will arise at some stage that don't obviously point to any particular agency or organisation.

If you are stuck, give us a call. While we may not always be able to answer your query on the spot, we can identify the right path to take. Our experience with both levels of government and all major stakeholders in the apprenticeship system gives us the edge in identifying the best path to resolve your issue.

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