

# Employer Tips for a Successful Apprenticeship

## 1. *Get the right person for the apprenticeship*

- There should be a commitment from your business to the apprentice and a commitment from the apprentice to your business and the trade they are undertaking
- Prioritise candidates who link the apprenticeship to a career in the industry

## 2. *Be clear about expectations before both parties have signed the training contract*

- Make sure both you and the apprentice have a good and consistent understanding of what is being undertaken and what both parties' expectations and responsibilities are

## 3. *Provide a thorough induction*

- Ensure a thorough induction process that covers:
  - o Occupational Safety and Health
  - o Channels of communication
  - o Grievance procedures including for bullying/harassment
  - o A summary of expectations that is linked to outcomes in the training plan

## 4. *Implement a structured monitoring program that is linked to the training plan*

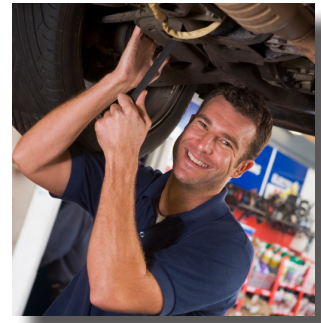
- Review the training plan at scheduled, regular intervals to make sure the apprentice is on track and the training plan is still relevant



## 5. ***Establish and maintain easily accessible lines of communication***

- Communicate regularly with the apprentice and ensure he/she is comfortable asking you questions and raising issues
- If you are not the direct supervisor, make sure you communicate regularly with the supervisor and that the supervisor communicates and monitors the apprentice regularly

- Consider assigning a mentor to the apprentice. You may also wish to use a “buddy” system which is less formal. If you have a newly qualified tradesperson in the business they may be the most appropriate employee to fill this role as they will be more familiar with the types of issues new apprentices are likely to face.



- Schedule a regular monthly meeting to monitor progress. If things are going well it might only be 5 minutes per month, however the apprentice should feel that their wellbeing matters to the organisation and that there is an avenue for them to address problems.
- Ask the apprentice if they are happy with the training that is being provided, both on the job and with their training provider

## 6. ***Establish and maintain a positive and supportive environment***

- 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.
- Ensure the apprentice is receiving constant feedback both positive and constructive:
  - o When the apprentice is doing a good job, let them know. An apprentice who takes pride in good work is more valuable to your organisation.

- o Ensure any constructive criticism is delivered professionally (not in a personal manner) and in the context of continuing development and improvement
- o Any disciplinary or conduct issues should be addressed in private
- Ensure adequate supervision – particularly during the beginning of the apprenticeship
  - o Providing that extra effort at the outset will result in a more effective worker and save you time and money in the long term
- Remember that an apprentice may be new to the industry or even to a working environment
  - o They may take longer to learn
  - o They may need simpler instruction
  - o They may be less likely to ask questions for fear of looking “stupid” or incompetent
- Ask the apprentice if they are happy with the training that is being provided, both on the job and with their training provider

### **7. *Keep the apprentice motivated in his/her work – provide opportunities***

- 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 apprentices 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

## 8. Collaborate with other stakeholders

- Maintain a good relationship with:
  - o the training provider
  - o ApprentiCentre
  - o AMA Apprenticeship and Traineeship Services
  - o The apprentice's parents (where appropriate)

## 9. Deal with problems

- If you see a problem act quickly. Problems are almost always easier to deal with the quicker they are addressed.
- Seek help if you need it. You may be able to use the assistance of:
  - o ApprentiCentre
  - o AMA Apprenticeship and Traineeship Services
  - o The West Australian Industrial Relations Commission free mediation service: <http://www.edr.wairc.wa.gov.au/>

## 10. Ensure you are paying the correct wage

- Wage concerns are a dominant reason for apprentice drop out. Explain to the apprentice which award covers their employment and that you have made sure you are complying with the law.
- Wage calculations can be difficult however there are several free resources you can use to assist you:
  - o Wageline 1300 655 266
  - o Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94
- If you are a member of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry or another industry group, they may also be able to provide assistance

