



Civil construction trainees and apprentices FAQs

Why did civil construction traineeships become apprenticeships?

The [Civil Construction Pilot Program](#) was launched in September 2021, to facilitate a change from the previous two-year civil construction traineeship to a three-year apprenticeship across nine different trade qualifications. This change has occurred in response to industry demand and extensive consultation. The aim of the pilot is to increase skills and employment outcomes for individuals. (<https://ctf.wa.gov.au/what-we-do/civil-construction-pilot-program>)

During the pilot program, ongoing feedback and evaluation will occur. The [Construction Training Fund](#) (CTF) will provide additional funding to employers to address any potential wage gap issues where the minimum wage for apprentices would otherwise be less than the minimum wage for trainees.

Who do I contact if I want to hire a trainee or apprentice?

If you have already identified a suitable candidate, or you wish to sign up an existing worker, contact an [Australian Apprenticeship Support Network](#) (AASN) provider to arrange a meeting. The trainee or apprentice will also need to attend the meeting.

If you are unsure about which [Registered Training Organisation](#) (RTO) to use, or the most relevant qualification, the AASN will be able to provide you with advice at the sign up meeting.

If you prefer to do some research before a sign up meeting, contact your local TAFE, private training provider or [Group Training Organisation](#) (GTO). They may also be able to connect you with potential candidates that are currently completing a pre-vocational program such as the [Infrastructure Ready Program](#). (<https://www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au/pathways#infrastructure-ready-program>)

If you need help to find a suitable candidate, contact one or more of the following.

- AASN
- GTO
- TAFE or private training provider
- Jobs and Skills Centre
- Local schools
- Employment service providers
- Other organisations in your network

The Service Delivery Coordination Unit at the Department of Training and Workforce Development works closely with these stakeholders to facilitate cohorts of entry level workers via the four-week *Infrastructure Ready Job Ready Program*. To find out more about this email irp@dtwd.wa.gov.au or phone 08 6551 5049.

If you want to employ an apprentice or trainee who has partially completed their training, you can also search the [out of contract register](#) on the Jobs and Skills WA website.

How do I attract trainees or apprentices when the minimum wage is not as attractive as labour hire or general labourer rates of pay?

You can pay a trainee or apprentice whatever you think is fair, as long as it's equal to or higher than the Award wage. This is quite common in the current labour market. Even if you host a trainee or apprentice through a GTO, your company can decide how much to pay.

If I need more workers urgently, how can I get a trainee or apprentice started quickly?

It is perfectly acceptable to start a new employee with labour hire or as a general labourer today, then book an appointment with an AASN who will do all the paperwork on your behalf at a time that's convenient to you.

Apprentices can be existing workers. In fact, you may prefer to employ someone for a period, then sign them as an apprentice if they are a good fit with your team.

Keep in mind, trainees need to be signed up within three months of commencement if you want access to government incentives. There is more flexibility for apprenticeships and exceptions to this rule, such as the current [existing worker traineeship](#) for the *Certificate IV in Civil Construction*.

<http://www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au/ewt>

What do I do if I am concerned about providing consistent work for the apprentice for three years?

Many traditional trades have this same issue, but there are different ways to manage this.

Firstly, when you sign up a new apprentice it's important for an employer to be honest so that everyone knows what to expect.

Yes — there is a signed contract, but if there isn't enough work to do we recommend you contact the Department of Training and Workforce Development's Apprenticeship Office on 13 19 54 to discuss options for the apprentice.

You may also wish to consider using a GTO who, among other things, is responsible for facilitating continuity of employment for the duration of a traineeship or apprenticeship.

Can an apprentice complete their trade in less than three years?

It is recommended that employers liaise with the RTO to ensure the learning is high quality and (at least initially) scheduled to take place over the full three year duration of the apprenticeship contract. This ensures the apprentice is given plenty of time to refine their skills at each stage of their learning.

However, in some cases an apprentice may complete their trade in less than three years especially if they are a quick learner or have previous knowledge or experience. In these situations, an early completion may occur if the employer, RTO and apprentice all agree and all units of competency have been successfully completed.

How can I minimise disruption if an RTO expects me to release an apprentice to do off-the-job training?

At the beginning of an apprenticeship you can negotiate and schedule the training with your chosen RTO, including exactly how and when the training will take place to achieve the best outcome for all parties, especially the trainee or apprentice.

However it should be noted that, for some aspects of any given trade qualification, off-the-job training may be the most practical approach from both an RTO and employer perspective.

It is widely recognised that employers make important contributions to successful outcomes for traineeships and apprenticeships, not the least being releasing the trainee or apprentice to complete scheduled off-the-job training. This is acknowledged via various financial incentives, wage subsidies, and trainee/apprentice award wages.

How do I support a trainee or apprentice effectively?

The Construction Training Fund's industry advisors would be a good starting point for you to get some assistance. Resources are also available to support you as an employer. Some of these resources are free, especially to help apprentices from diverse backgrounds or who are clients of employment service providers.

You, or supervisors in your company, may benefit from training. Currently, the *Certificate IV in Civil Construction* qualification is subsidised, and available as an existing worker traineeship with course fees reduced by 72 per cent. Your company may be eligible to receive Government incentives if you sign up an employee to the Certificate IV traineeship.

Hiring an apprentice is a way of providing you and staff within your company with leadership and supervisory experience. Helping someone complete a trade is rewarding. Staff who supervise apprentices gain satisfaction, knowing that they are passing on their knowledge, and setting up a new entrant to the industry for success.

The process of explaining how to complete the technical elements of a task encourages senior staff to think about how or why they do things. Apprentices also ask questions and sometimes bring new knowledge back from their off the job training that may help to improve practices within the company.

RTO's are also required to visit the workplace to meet with employers and apprentices at least two times per year for the duration of the traineeship or apprenticeship. This meeting is an opportunity to discuss strategies to support on-the-job learning and address performance issues if required.

My company is quite specialised, so how do I provide on-the-job learning opportunities for a trainee or apprentice to complete their whole qualification?

This issue can be overcome with forward planning.

- 1 The RTO could discuss a plan whereby certain 'core' units in the qualification are completed off the job where possible and relevant 'elective' units are chosen (i.e. as permitted within the training package rules); or
- 2 The employer could arrange for the apprentice to spend time with a sub-contractor or partner company.
- 3 The company could engage a GTO, and the GTO would be required to implement a training plan for the apprentice, whereby they are hosted by other employers to complete different components of their training. This approach is commonly applied across a range of trades.

How do I stop graduating apprentices from leaving my company for higher paid jobs in other industries?

You're right, this might happen. But on the flipside, an apprenticeship is a good way to earn loyalty and trust from your employees which can help to reduce staff turnover.

You have up to three years to show the apprentice how enjoyable it is to work for you. The apprentice will form bonds with you and their colleagues.

Some employers have an ongoing cycle (e.g. annually or bi-annually) whereby they employ apprentices on a regular basis, including having multiple apprentices at different stages in their learning journey. In these cases, an employer may require a graduating apprentice to move on so a new apprentice can start (depending of course if there are vacancies for a qualified tradespersons within the company).

Apprenticeship and traineeship contacts

Australian Apprenticeships Support Network (Commonwealth Government)

AASNs are a great starting point if you are thinking about hiring a trainee or apprentice. They do all the paperwork for you, explain the role of the employer, and ensure you receive any financial incentives from the Commonwealth Government that you may be eligible for.

<https://www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au/training/apprenticeships-and-traineeships#australian-apprenticeship-support-network-aasn-providers-in-wa>

CTF industry training advisors

CTF's industry training advisors can meet with you to provide advice on options to recruit and train new people to your team or how to upskill existing workers. They also understand the funding system relating to the WA construction industry. Email ita@ctf.wa.gov.au to find out more.

<https://ctf.wa.gov.au/>

Department of Training and Workforce Development's Apprenticeship Office

The [Apprenticeship Office](#) provides more specific information about traineeships and apprenticeships in WA. They can also assist to resolve disputes or contractual issues if they arise. Email apprenticeshipoffice@dtwd.wa.gov.au or phone 13 19 54.

<https://www.dtwd.wa.gov.au/apprenticeship-office>

Jobs and Skills Centres

Jobs and Skills Centres help to connect jobseekers with employers via an online jobs board and career advisors across multiple locations in both Perth and regional areas. Their services are free.

<https://www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au/jobs-and-skills-centre>

Employment facilitators (Commonwealth Government)

If you need assistance to tap into the jobseekers talent pool the [Employment Facilitators](#) may be able to connect you with the relevant support agencies in your local area. In some instances, they may also be able to provide advice with regards to potential funding opportunities or special programs to support employment outcomes.

<https://www.dese.gov.au/local-jobs-program/employment-facilitators>

Out of contract register

This register provides a list of all trainees and apprentices who have had their contracts terminated or cancelled, which is often due to no fault of their own. These candidates may come with good references too, so it's definitely worth keeping your eye on this list.

<https://www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au/register>

TAFE colleges

TAFE courses are Government subsidised, and TAFE has the capacity to facilitate training for civil construction traineeships or apprenticeships.

Contact the college directly to see if they can meet your specific requirements.

Central Regional TAFE	https://www.centralregionaltafe.wa.edu.au/
North Metropolitan TAFE	https://www.northmetrotafe.wa.edu.au/
North Regional TAFE	https://www.northregionaltafe.wa.edu.au/
South Metropolitan TAFE	https://www.southmetrotafe.wa.edu.au/
South Regional TAFE	https://www.southregionaltafe.wa.edu.au/

Private training providers

The following training providers deliver civil construction traineeships and apprenticeships in WA at Certificate II, III and/or IV level (current 25 May 2022) and training costs are subsidised with Government funding. Contact them directly to find out the range of training options they offer.

Apprenticeship and Traineeship Company	https://atcemployment.com.au/
Australian Training Management	https://www.australiantraining.com.au/
Carey Training	https://careytraining.com.au/
Civil Train WA	https://civiltrain.com.au/qualifications/western-australia/
Down To Earth Training and Assessing	https://www.down2earth.com.au/
Djaringo	https://www.djaringo.org.au/
Skill Hire	https://www.skillhire.com.au/

Alternatively, go to <https://www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au/building-and-construction> to search for a training provider.

Group Training Organisations (GTOs)

If you wish to utilise a GTO to sign up a trainee or apprentice, visit the Jobs and Skills WA website for further information about GTOs.

<https://www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au/resources-employers/developing-your-workforce/training-and-development#group-training-organisations>

Your company may be able to access the [Group Training Organisation Wage Subsidy \(GWS\)](#) which provides financial assistance to create new jobs for apprentices and trainees in the building and construction sector by covering the estimated average base wage paid to apprentices and trainees for the duration of their apprenticeship/traineeship.

<https://www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au/employer-incentives#new-group-training-organisation-wage-subsidy>