

What is an Apprenticeship or Traineeship?

Apprenticeships and traineeships are formal training arrangements between an employer and an employee. They combine work with study for a qualification, certificate or diploma.

They can be full-time, part-time or school-based. Anyone who's old enough to work is able to sign up for an apprenticeship or traineeship. There are wide variations in arrangements, particularly around pay, support and time off.

The training has to be registered and recognised by your state or territory training authority. They decide which arrangements are apprenticeships and which are traineeships.

Why consider hiring an apprentice or trainee?

Hiring an apprentice or trainee can be a cost-effective way to build skills in your business while supporting someone starting a new career. Young workers can bring enthusiasm and new skills to a workplace and can become loyal and valuable employees.

You could also be [eligible for financial incentives](#).

What am I responsible for?

Best practice employers understand their obligations to young workers and recognise that their guidance and support can shape young employees' futures and their attitudes to work.

As an employer you are also responsible for:

- meeting legal requirements (such as employment conditions and [occupational health and safety](#));
- providing [appropriate supervision and support](#) for the apprentice or trainee; and
- lodging the required training documentation.

Can new employees be paid as trainees while they're learning on-the-job or during their probation period?

New employees can only be paid as a trainee if they are doing a registered traineeship that is recognised in the state or territory where they are working.

They cannot be paid as a trainee just because they are new, learning on the job or on probation. Most awards will provide for a junior rate of pay allowing the employer to pay wages at a percentage of the adult rate depending on the employee's age. This is different to a trainee or apprenticeship wage. For more information about junior wages see the [Awards, Agreements, and Entitlements section](#) on the People in Agriculture website.

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How long does an apprenticeship usually take?

Apprenticeships usually take 3 to 4 years full-time.

Starting an apprenticeship or traineeship

Before someone can start an apprenticeship or traineeship, the employer and employee need to register with the state or territory training authority. This is called 'signing up'.

Step 1: Contact an Australian Apprenticeships Centre (AAC)

To find your nearest AAC, go to www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au or call 13 38 73.

These centres advise on apprenticeships and traineeships and can help you choose the right training. They can give you information about the paperwork you need to fill in and the supervision, facilities and support you'll need to give your apprentice or trainee.

They also look after [Australian Government incentive payments](#).

Step 2: Contact a Registered Training Organisation

Apprentices and trainees need to be enrolled for training through a [Registered Training Organisation \(RTO\)](#). They can assess apprentice and trainees' skills, and help work out a training plan.

Step 3: Fill in the paperwork

The Australian Apprenticeships Centre will help you fill in and lodge all the paperwork, including the training contract.

Determining
pay rates and
classifications

Different Types
of Employment

Training
Programs

Professional
Development
and Training

Can an existing employee start an apprenticeship or traineeship with their current employer?

Yes, provided there is no pay reduction. You will still need to register the apprenticeship or traineeship with your [state or territory training authority](#).

What pay rate does an employee get after they finish their apprenticeship or traineeship?

They are entitled to the [rate for their classification in their modern award](#). This is based on their age, qualifications and skills.

Are apprentices and trainees entitled to paid sick leave and annual leave?

They are entitled to [personal \(sick\) leave and annual leave](#) under the National Employment Standards the same as other employees.

Some school-based trainees get an [extra loading instead of paid annual leave, personal leave and public holidays](#).

Do apprentices and trainees get penalty rates and overtime?

They're entitled to the same conditions as other employees, [including penalty rates, overtimes rates, allowances and breaks](#).

Do apprentices and trainees get paid while they are at training?

Full and part time trainees must be paid for any time spent doing training. School-based trainees don't get paid for training – they get an hourly rate for all hours they work on the job.

Whilst there are guidelines for payment, the reality is that farmers and employees usually negotiate this and make arrangements that suit their circumstances.

Who pays for the training?

State and territory training authorities decide who pays for training. Some modern awards require the employer to cover the cost of training.

Often the employer will pay for all or part of the training, even if they don't have to. Sometimes the government covers the training costs. For more information contact your state or territory training authority - visit the [Apprentice campaigns Section of the Fair Work Australia website](#) for more information.