

A guide for employers of apprentices

If you own or manage a business, there has never been a better time to hire an apprentice.

Changes to the Victorian TAFE and training system are creating a more flexible system with a wider range of training options to make it easier for employers to get the staff training they need.

From 1 January 2011, every student who enrolls in an apprenticeship will have access to government subsidised training through the *Victorian Training Guarantee*, regardless of their prior qualifications.

Ongoing government support and advice is available to employers of apprentices and you may be eligible for funding and access to incentives.

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a Contract of Training between an employer and an employee in which the apprentice learns the occupation under a Training Plan. The Training Plan combines practical on-the-job experience with structured training provided by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

Where can I go to find an apprentice?

Contact your nearest Australian Apprenticeships Centre. They can provide information, administrative assistance and support to prospective and current employers of apprentices. They are able to link into job-matching services to place you in touch with job seekers and other people wanting to do an apprenticeship.

Importantly, they can check the availability of incentive payments you may be eligible to receive as an employer of an apprentice and help with completing the relevant application forms.

To find out where your nearest Australian Apprenticeships Centre is located, visit australianapprenticeships.gov.au or phone 13 38 73.

What incentives are available for taking on apprentices?

There are a variety of incentives and bonuses available to support businesses taking on apprentices. Substantial incentive payments are made when apprentices commence, recommence and complete their training.

There are also additional forms of financial assistance offered in particular circumstances, for example where the apprentice is aged 25 or over at the time of commencement, and in Certificate III or IV level qualifications in a trade occupation experiencing a skills shortage.

Other assistance includes the Tools For Your Trade payment to apprentices and a range of financial supports for apprentices with a disability.

To find out more about the range of incentives available, and to see if your business or apprentice is eligible, visit australianapprenticeships.gov.au or phone 13 38 73.

What is a Group Training Organisation?

A Group Training Organisation is a great alternative for small and medium sized businesses which are unable to offer an apprentice a permanent position because they can't guarantee ongoing work or may not have the time to undertake all employment and training functions.

The Group Training Organisation acts as the primary employer of the apprentice and hires them to other businesses, called host employers, while they are undertaking their training. To find out more about Group Training in Victoria visit gtav.com.au or phone (03) 9639 3955.

Are there any fees and charges for training?

All RTOs receiving government funding are required to charge tuition fees. There may also be additional charges for tools and services. Fees and charges are subject to change so ask your RTO what the fees are.

What are the fees?

In 2011, apprentice fees will be a minimum of \$58 and a maximum of \$923.

What are my obligations if I am employing an apprentice?

When you employ an apprentice you must provide appropriate working conditions, as legally required by the industry awards. These include a safe workplace, a working environment safe from bullying and harassment, Work Safe coverage, the correct rate of pay for the apprenticeship, and superannuation contributions to the apprentice's chosen fund.

What are the wages and general conditions of employment required for my apprentice?

Wages and general conditions of employment vary from industry to industry. To ensure you are paying the correct wages to your apprentice as well as providing all their sick leave, recreation leave and other entitlements, visit fairwork.gov.au or call the Fair Work Information Line on 13 13 94.

Who can I employ as an apprentice?

Apprentices can be anyone of working age who is suitable for employment in your industry. They must also be a citizen or a permanent resident of Australia or other specific visa category holder. For further information:

- For further information on courses and training providers visit skills.vic.gov.au or call the TAFE Course Line on 13 18 23.
- To contact an Australian Apprenticeships Centre visit australianapprenticeships.gov.au or phone 13 38 73.
- For general information on how to run, start or grow your business visit business.vic.gov.au or phone 13 22 15.

