

Apprentice Employer FAQs

Q. How long do apprenticeships go for?

The duration of an apprenticeship varies depending on the trade. As an example, a standard carpentry apprenticeship may take four years whereas a standard bricklaying apprenticeship may take three years. It is very common for an individual to need this amount of time to complete their apprenticeship, however those who have more experience or who pick up the trade more easily, may complete the apprenticeship in a shorter timeframe than this.

Q. I'd like to sign up an apprentice. How do I do this?

Apprentice Connect Australia Providers (Providers) provide a free service to employers and apprentices to facilitate the sign-up of an apprenticeship and contacting one is your first step when taking on an apprentice. They can assist you with:

- Organising the Training Contract between you and your apprentice
- Assessing your eligibility for incentives and subsidies
- Finding an apprentice if you have not already found one
- Support throughout the apprenticeship – your 'go-to'

You can search for your local Apprentice Connect Australia Providers by visiting the [Australian Apprenticeships website](#).

Q. Where can I find an apprentice?

- Master Builders Victoria [Careers Hub](#)
- Recruitment services offered by your Apprentice Connect Australia Provider ([Provider](#))
- Contacting your local TAFE

Q. I've heard about 'competency-based training' for apprentices. What is it?

Competency-based training is a flexible method of training where an individual is required to meet certain industry-defined skills and standards. In Vocational Education and Training, an individual studies Units of Competency whereby they can either be marked as 'Competent' or 'Not Yet Competent'. If they are 'Not yet Competent' they can be assessed against that unit again.

Importantly, competency-based training is not time-based. Once an individual reaches the required competency, they are able to progress. In the context of an apprenticeship, this means that an apprentice can progress to the 2nd level (or 2nd year) once they have completed their 1st level (or 1st year) units and so on.

For example, this means that you could have a 2nd year apprentice who is not necessarily in their second year of employment as an apprentice with you.

Q. Are there any incentives or subsidies for employers of apprentices?

Yes. The majority of construction employers are able to access some sort of incentive for taking on apprentice. There are various incentives available and eligibility criteria apply. See our [resources page](#) for a summary of available incentives and subsidies. Your Australian Apprenticeship Support Network will be able to assess your eligibility and assist you with claiming.

Q. How much are apprentice wages?

For many construction businesses, the Building and Construction General On-site Award 2020 (the Award) will set the minimum rates of pay for their apprentices. Under the Award, the applicable minimum rate for an apprentice will depend on the following factors, including the:

- Trade being undertaken;
- Stage of the apprenticeship;
- Age of the apprentice;
- Industry where work is performed (residential or non-residential); and
- Whether the apprentice has or has not completed year 12.

The MBV EIR Advisory Team produces a Wage Bulletin to assist members to identify the applicable minimum rates of pay for employees under the Award, including for apprentices. You can download a copy of the Wage Bulletin for the Award [here](#).

Please be aware, if your business has an enterprise agreement, the minimum rate for an apprentice may be set by the enterprise agreement rather than the Award.

If you would like to discuss minimum rates of pay further, we recommend that you contact the MBV EIR team on (03) 9411 4555.

Q. Do I need to pay my apprentice any allowances?

The Award has several allowances that may be applicable for apprentices.

For instance, an apprentice is entitled to an industry and a tool allowance. As these are all-purpose allowances, they are factored into the apprentice's minimum rate of pay. If you utilise the Wage Bulletin for the Award produced by the MBV EIR Advisory Team, the industry and tool allowances are already built into the rates of pay.

Another allowance commonly applicable to apprentices is the travel allowance. An apprentice will be entitled to a proportion of the full travel allowance. The travel allowance compensates the apprentice for travel to and from the construction site. To be entitled to the travel allowance, the apprentice must start or finish work on a construction site.

An apprentice is not entitled to a travel allowance where you provide transportation from home to the construction site and return (i.e. you give them a lift), or where you provide a fully maintained vehicle to them free of charge.

The rate of the travel allowance payable to an apprentice depends on the apprentice's stage of apprenticeship. You can view the applicable travel allowance rates in the Wage Bulletin produced by the MBV EIR team [here](#).

If you would like further information about allowances under the Award, please contact the MBV EIR team on (03) 9411 4555.

Q. I've heard that employers need to pay for their apprentice's training fees and textbook costs. Is this true?

Yes. Under the Award, an employer is required to reimburse the apprentice for the fees charged by the training provider, as well as the cost of any prescribed textbooks. The Award also allows you to pay these costs directly to the training provider.

Where you reimburse your apprentice, you must do so by the later of:

- 6 months of starting the apprenticeship or a stage of the apprenticeship; or
- 3 months of starting training with the training provider.

If the apprentice does not achieve satisfactory progress, you are not required to reimburse the apprentice for the costs of training and textbooks.

Q. Can I employ an apprentice on a part time basis?

Yes. Under the Award, apprentices may be engaged on a part-time basis.

However, to meet minimum training requirements, you may be required to engage your apprentice for a minimum number of hours per week.

Q. Are there any other things I should be aware of?

Yes. While these FAQs are only designed as a starting point in engaging an apprentice, there are several other employment obligations you will need to meet. These may be required by the Award, the Fair Work Act or even other legislative instruments.

For instance, the Award requires you to put certain particulars of employment in writing. This must be done at the time of engagement and is in addition to the contract for training that you have with your apprentice. To assist you in meeting this requirement, the MBV EIR Advisory Team has template letters of engagement that you can utilise.

For further information on the obligations under the Award, the MBV EIR Advisory Team has produced a guidance publication on the minimum employment conditions under the Award. You can download it [here](#).

In relation to other legislative requirements, you must have your apprentice covered by your WorkCover insurance and have them registered with LeavePlus, which is the construction industry's long service leave fund. You should also be aware of your obligations to withhold tax and make superannuation contributions to the

employee. At the time of engagement, you must also provide your apprentice with a copy of the [Fair Work Information Statement](#) and [Fixed Term Contract Information Statement](#).

If you are engaging an apprentice and have further questions, we recommend that you call the MBV EIR Advisory Team on (03) 9411 4555.

Last updated and released July 2024