



Knowledge&Skills
Building a Future



SO YOU'RE A WORKPLACE COACH

Support kit for the workplace coach or mentor working with new apprentices and trainees





Commonwealth of Australia DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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State of Victoria

The Office of Training and Tertiary Education, Department of Education and Training, is proud to produce this new booklet aimed at assisting workplace coaches understand key elements of the vocational, education and training system. It includes tips and ideas for supervising and coaching, and obligations in relation to workplace training.

Acknowledgements

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SO YOU'RE A WORKPLACE COACH

A booklet designed to support workplace mentors and coaches in working with apprentices and trainees on the job

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Your role

As a workplace coach you will coach the apprentice/trainee, act as a mentor and support someone embarking on a new career.

A good workplace coach will:

- take a personal interest in the apprentice/trainee's development
- communicate well and develop a rapport with the apprentice/trainee
- provide feedback and progress reports
- be a good role model.

Be clear on your role and responsibilities. Ask:

- what support is available to you in the workplace?
- who is the workplace supervisor that you report to?
- what does the apprentice/trainee have to achieve and by when?
- who is the training organisation and who is the contact person?
- who else will be involved in training in the workplace?
- how do you get a copy of the Training Plan?
- how do you report the apprentice/trainee's progress?

Getting started

Develop a good relationship with the apprentice/trainee. Make sure you:

- welcome the apprentice/trainee and introduce them to other staff
- take an interest
- ask questions

'How's your work going?'

'Are you finding your way around the place okay?'

'How're your classes going?'

'Is there anything I can do to help?'

Workplace Training

- ensure all apprentices/trainees undertaking workplace training at AQF levels 3 and above are withdrawn from routine work duties for a minimum of three hours per week, averaged over a four week cycle for the purpose of undertaking structured training/learning activities (pro rata for part time).
- All apprentices/trainees undertaking workplace training at AQF levels 1 and 2 are withdrawn from routine work duties for a minimum of 1.5 hours per week, averaged over a two month cycle for the purpose of undertaking structured training/learning activities. This release must occur periodically.
- The training undertaken during the period of release must include a focus on the compliance and regulatory units and the units concentrating on generic skills. Up to 40 hours of this training may be transferred, to be delivered in one or more blocks during the first three months of the training program.
- If the apprentice is to receive off-the-job training at an RTO, you must allow the apprentice/trainee to attend training classes (this is paid time if during normal working hours).



Training tips

People learn best when actively involved in their learning. When teaching a new task ensure your apprentice/trainee knows:

- why you are doing things
- why these things are relevant
- why these things are important
- how and when assessment will occur.

Giving instructions

Take time to think about the instructions you give. Write down the instructions or break the job into steps if necessary.

To give clear instructions you should:

- assume no prior knowledge
- explain why the job/task is done this way
- use clear and simple language
- include safe work practices in your instructions
- ask questions to check for understanding
- make sure there are no distractions.

Show and tell

Take time to show the apprentice/trainee how to do things the correct way.

Observing is a quick and very effective way to learn. It allows you to:

- demonstrate
- explain why the task is done this way
- use correct work practices.

Practise, practise, practise

Allow time for the apprentice/trainee to practise new skills. Expect mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes. Point the apprentice/trainee in the direction of how they can do it right.

Watch and coach:

- be patient
- ask questions to encourage the apprentice/trainee:
'That's right Sarah, now what's the next step?'
'If the engine won't start, what steps would you take to find the problem?'

Encourage and correct:

- give praise where it is due
- suggest techniques to improve:
'That's good Louise. Now you've mastered the register, I'd like you to concentrate on customer service.'

Ask questions

- check for understanding:
'What is the first step in making an EFTPOS transaction?'
- involve the learner in decision making:
'What do you think is the next step?'
- obtain information and feedback:
'How is your training in the grocery department going? Is there anything you need?'

Progress and monitoring

Check progress

- know how the apprentice/trainee is progressing in all areas of training
- set a regular meeting time with the apprentice/trainee
- use the Training Plan – it outlines the what, where and when of training – remember it is a flexible document – you can change it with the involvement of the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and apprentice/trainee
- ensure the apprentice/trainee's workbook is signed off.

Give feedback

Feedback is important because it:

- allows the apprentice/trainee to measure their progress
- encourages and builds confidence
- targets areas to focus on to improve skills:
'Now I'd like you to concentrate on getting messages down properly. If you don't know how to spell someone's name – ask.'
- allows you to openly discuss progress and concerns:
'That's great Sarah, you're getting really good on the phone now.'

Seek feedback

- find out what areas they need extra help with or may be worried about:
'You don't seem nearly so nervous when you're answering the phone Sarah. How are you feeling about it now?'
- wait for answers – don't be afraid of silence
- be positive, help them find their own solutions.

Ask the right questions

Ask open questions (who, why, what, when, where, how), to encourage feedback:

'How are your classes going? What are you doing next?'

Yes/No questions don't get much information:

'Do you like your classes?'...

Motivate

Provide variety

Apprentices/trainees often spend the majority of their time doing routine jobs. Variety allows the apprentice/trainee to build confidence in their ability as well as make training more interesting.

Variety could include:

- new and different tasks
- opportunities to apply new skills in different work environments – such as alternative work sites, other departments or sections of the business
- visits to trade shows or contact with clients or customers.

Give recognition

You could try these:

- make an announcement at work about their achievements
- give them a mention in the company newsletter or on the noticeboard
- organise a ticket to a trade show
- arrange for them to attend a management meeting or a sales meeting
- nominate the apprentice/trainee for an industry training award – check with your registered training organisation or New Apprenticeships Centre.



Solutions to problems

Most apprentice/trainees experience problems at some stage during training. These problems can be with the job itself, the training or perhaps more personal issues.

If workplace performance is affected, perhaps the apprentice/trainee is:

- nervous about how well they are going
- uncomfortable with some of the other staff
- under stress – too much on their plate at once, or behind in some aspect of their training
- having personal and/or home difficulties
- having problems with reading, writing or maths requirements of the job or the training.



Tips when things are not quite right

- acknowledge that you are aware that all is not well
- encourage them to talk, though don't push too hard
- ask them open questions – questions that produce more than simply yes or no:
'Look Joe I know you aren't happy with things at the moment and I'd like to talk about it and see if we can work something out.'
- check your understanding and draw out more information:
'So Joe, you don't feel like you are learning anything new and are always doing the tasks that nobody else wants to do?'
- wait for them to speak – a pause can be good
- try not to interrupt
- be aware of your body language and gestures – nod with understanding, don't cross your arms.

Towards a solution

When an issue arises, you can help the apprentice/trainee work through it.

Follow these steps:

- have a positive attitude
- put the trainee's needs into perspective
- look for a win/win situation
- negotiate, encourage and advise:
'Okay Joe, you'll still have to do the cleaning up. But when you've finished I've arranged for you to spend an hour in the accounts department to see how the invoicing works. And next time a pricing job comes in you can assist me with it.'

Solutions to problems

Reading, writing and maths

When working with the apprentice/trainee think about:

- what level of reading, writing and maths does the trainee need to effectively carry out the job
- how you communicate with the apprentice/trainee
- what skills do you expect of them when coaching and giving instructions
- whether the instructions are more complex than the job
- whether you have realistic expectations.



Tips

- provide examples of documents you use in the workplace – a completed order form, letters
- provide opportunities to copy – lists or order numbers frequently used
- allow plenty of time to practise tasks until they become familiar
- give instructions in sequence, so it's easy to remember:
'First check the address, then fill out the order.'
- avoid mixing up the sequence when you give the instruction. Don't say:
'Before you fill the order out make sure you've checked the address.'
- when you've given a complex set of instructions, ask the trainee to repeat them – remember to keep it supportive:
'Okay then, what do you do first? And then?'
- give positive feedback even for small steps:
'Okay, that sounds like you've got the hang of it.'
- discuss how the RTO can help you with reading, writing and maths assistance for the apprentice/trainee
- encourage the apprentice/trainee to ask questions when they don't understand.

Getting help

You're not on your own. There are organisations that can assist. Find out what the real problem is and seek help to solve the problem if necessary.

Three easy steps

- 1 Consult your workplace supervisor.
- 2 Talk to your local New Apprenticeships Centre for further advice and assistance.

To find a New Apprenticeships Centre call **1800 639 629** or visit the website at www.newapprenticeships.gov.au

- 3 Contact an Apprenticeship Field Officer (AFO). They work for the State Training Authority, which in Victoria is the Office of Training and Tertiary Education, and provide assistance to resolve problems between employers and their apprentices/trainees.

Conversations with AFOs are confidential.

For the nearest AFO to your worksite refer to the phone list below:

Central/Northern Metropolitan	9412 6600
North Western Metropolitan	9318 2488
Eastern Metropolitan	9213 6860
Southern Metropolitan	9238 8465
Geelong	5225 0604
Shepparton	5833 2567
Wangaratta	5723 6335
Morwell	5127 0276
Warragul	5623 2740
Bendigo	5434 1670
Warrnambool	5564 8917
Ballarat	5327 8266
Mildura	5022 3755

Apprenticeship Administration Branch
Phone **9412 6600**



Training talk



Workplace supervisor

A training manager who will ensure the apprentice/trainee is provided with the opportunities to master the skills and competencies required for their job and training program.

Workplace coach

Person chosen to coach, teach, train, mentor, monitor and guide the apprentice/trainee. In some workplaces the workplace supervisor and workplace coach are the same person.

Assessor

The person(s) responsible for assessment who will determine whether your apprentice/trainee is competent. This person(s) must be qualified. Assessment is organised by the RTO.

On the job training

Instruction, practice and feedback conducted in the workplace.

Off the job training

Conducted away from the worksite, at an RTO, in a classroom at your worksite or outside your organisation.

Training Plan

A document that details the training to be conducted, the method and location. Negotiated between you, the training organisation and the apprentice/trainee.

Training Package

A national resource that consists of both compulsory and elective competencies that makes up national qualifications. Training Packages also include guidelines for assessment and may also include assessment materials and learning strategies.

Unit of competency

National industry approved standards that outline the knowledge and skills necessary for effective performance in the workplace.

Workplace assessment

Collecting evidence and determining if the apprentice/trainee is competent in an industry environment.

Recognition of current competency

The process of formally recognising current skills, knowledge and competencies already acquired through either formal or informal learning.

Who's who of training

The National Code of Good Practice outlines the responsibilities of employers and apprentices/trainees. Contact your New Apprenticeships Centre for a copy.

Employers

- meet legal obligations
- provide a safe working environment
- support the structured training
- provide supervision and support
- advise trainees of their rights and responsibilities.

Apprentices/trainees

- commit to work and training responsibilities
- require consent from a parent/guardian if less than 18 years of age
- participate in developing a Training Plan
- maintain a record of training.

State Training Authority – STA

Regulates apprenticeships/traineeships in your state or territory. The STA monitors the quality of training, approves RTOs. In addition the STA may:

- advise employers and apprentices/trainees on rights and obligations
- approve early completions, variations to Training Contracts, suspensions and cancellations
- provide field officers to solve problems between employers and their apprentice/trainees.

Apprenticeship/traineeship field officers

The Office of Training and Tertiary Education provide Apprenticeship Field Officers to assist to solve problems between employers and their apprentice/trainees. Contact the Apprenticeship Administration Branch.

Apprenticeship Administration Branch
Phone 9412 6600
Fax 9412 6644

Registered Training Organisation – RTO

Also called the Supervising Registered Training Organisation (SRTO). They can:

- assist you and the new apprentice/trainee to select an appropriate training program
- explain the requirements of the training program
- provide advice on fees and charges
- design a Training Plan that meets your needs
- provide training records and training materials
- train the apprentice/trainee and assist you to make sure training is completed
- visit your workplace to check progress
- provide additional learning support if required
- issue qualifications.

New Apprenticeships Centres

Provide free information and advice on:

- available Commonwealth and State Government incentives
- completing and lodging incentive forms
- general information about apprenticeships/traineeships
- selecting the appropriate training
- selecting appropriate RTOs
- rights, responsibilities and obligations
- completing a Training Contract.

Group Training Organisations – GTO

Also known as Group Training Companies (GTC), these organisations employ apprentices/trainees and hire them out to 'host' employers while they are undertaking their training. Group training allows you to become involved in training without the commitment of full-time permanent employment.

The GTO will:

- screen and recruit applicants
- handle wages, payroll tax and workers compensation under the Training Contract
- arrange the training
- monitor the progress of the new apprentice/trainee
- provide your organisation with a new apprentice without a long-term employment contract.

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It includes:

- explanations of common terms
- training tips
- where to go for assistance