

# Frequently Asked Questions for Public Sector Agencies

Skilling SA Public Sector

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## What is the Skilling SA Public Sector Project?

A signature project of the SA Government's [Skilling South Australia initiative](#), the *Skilling SA Public Sector Project* will see 2,689 trainees, apprentices, graduates and existing employees work and train within the South Australian Public Sector.

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment (OCPSE) is coordinating implementation of the project in the South Australian Public Sector in collaboration with the Department for Innovation and Skills (DIS) and participating agencies. Agencies with over 100 FTE have been allocated a nominal allocation over the project's four years.

Further information about the project can be found on [OCPSE's website](#).

In addition to the targets under the Skilling SA project, the Government, as part of the 2020-21 State Budget, has announced \$32.9 million of funding to support an additional 750 traineeship and apprenticeship places in agencies and funded projects over two years. These are for sectors with high growth potential including cyber security, aged care, disability services, and housing construction.

## How can my agency meet allocation targets?

There are three options available for agencies to meet allocation targets as part of the Skilling SA project:

- Pathway 1 – Directly employing a new trainee, apprentice or graduate on a Contract of Training
- Pathway 2 – Hosting a trainee, apprentice or graduate through a Group Training Organisation

- Pathway 3 – Upskilling an existing employee

Pathway 1 may impact an agency's FTE/Headcount, whereas pathways 2 and 3 do not.

OCPSE is working with agencies to discuss how allocations can be met in line with agency workforce planning. Further information about the pathways can be found on [OCPSE's website](#).

## What is a Group Training Organisation?

Group Training Organisations (GTOs) employ trainees and apprentices direct and host them to public sector agencies.

As part of this project seven GTOs have been procured to provide services in managing recruitment, training and employment of trainees, apprentices and graduates.

## Can we exceed our allocated targets for training?

Yes. All requests for support from agencies above allocated targets will be considered by OCPSE, subject to funding and eligibility.

## What if we cannot meet our allocated targets?

Agencies who believe they will not meet their allocated target are encouraged to contact OCPSE as soon as possible. There are many options to meet targets and OCPSE can provide advice and discuss agency needs to explore how current and future needs could be supported through the project.

## Do the traineeships funded through the State Budget Stimulus count towards Skilling SA targets?

No. These traineeships are funded separately to Skilling SA and are therefore reported separately.

## What are the eligibility requirements of a trainee?

Public sector trainees (Pathway 1) must be aged 17 years or older.

For upskilling existing employees and trainees hosted in the public sector via a GTO Pathway 1 & 2), there is no age limit.

Participants are not eligible to undertake a qualification equivalent to one they've already completed. However, they may enter a Contract of Training (CoT) to obtain a higher-level qualification, or qualification in an additional field of study.

## Can an existing public sector employee be placed on a Contract of Training (CoT)?

Yes, an existing employee upskilling as part of Skilling SA will have a CoT which will comprise of on-job and off-job training as prescribed in the *South Australian Skills Act 2008* (SAS Act).

Agencies should consider the employee's classification and role to decide what level of training is reasonable for this development.

Where a staff member enters a CoT their remuneration level and conditions of employment do not change; it continues in accordance with their existing employment contract.

## What qualifications are eligible under a CoT?

Eligible qualifications include Certificate III, Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma. The full list of available qualifications can be found on the Traineeship and Apprenticeship Pathways (TAP) Schedule found [here](#). This list includes qualifications, nominal duration of the contract, length of the probation period and supervision ratios.

## What qualifications are subsidised?

The Skilling SA Subsidised Traineeship and Apprenticeship List (STAL), found [here](#), lists the qualifications that may be subsidised in South Australia under a CoT arrangement. Most Apprenticeship and Traineeship pathways on the TAP Schedule are eligible for subsidised training.

## What if a qualification is not listed on the TAP Schedule or STAL that our agency wants to use?

If a course has been identified as not being available on the TAP Schedule and/or the STAL please contact the OCPSE Skilling SA team on [OCPSEskillingSA@sa.gov.au](mailto:OCPSEskillingSA@sa.gov.au).

## Does the employer need to be registered with the Department for Innovation and Skills (DIS) to employ a trainee or apprentice?

Yes, it is a requirement under the SAS Act that an employer is registered to employ trainees and apprentices in South Australia. In this case, the employer is the public sector agency.

Employer registration also includes the scope of relevant qualifications the agency can employ trainees and apprentices under.

To register or make changes to your registration, you can contact the DIS Traineeship and Apprenticeship Service team. Email: [skills@sa.gov.au](mailto:skills@sa.gov.au) | Infoline: 1800 673 097

## Does the employee need a Training Plan as well as a CoT?

Yes, a Training Plan is a requirement of the CoT and must be approved by the trainee or apprentice, employer and Training Provider (and a parent or legal guardian if the trainee/apprentice is under 18).

The Training Plan outlines the qualification being undertaken, method of training (on/off job) and the units of competency. The Training Plan is submitted to DIS by the Training Provider.

## Can a CoT be undertaken part time?

Yes, CoT hours can be averaged over 4 weeks with a minimum of 15 hours per week. If a CoT is part time the nominal duration of the contract is worked out on a pro rata basis and will be longer in duration than a full time CoT.

A CoT cannot be undertaken on a casual basis.

## What provisions for study time are available under a CoT?

CoT contain an obligation on the employer to provide paid time during work hours for completing the agreed study components of the qualification, as identified in the training plan.

## How do I know the probation period and nominal term for a trainee and/or apprentice under a CoT?

The [TAP Schedule](#) outlines the required probation period and the nominal term of the contract. A CoT can be completed earlier if all parties agree that the trainee or apprentice has achieved competency in the workplace and has successfully completed their formal training requirements.

A CoT up to and including a 24-month term has a 60-day probation period, a CoT which is more than 24 months has a 90-day probation period.

## What happens if we want to make a change to the CoT? (i.e termination, completion, suspension, transfer, extension or other modifications)

If both the employer and trainee agree to alter the CoT, an application can be made to DIS to vary the contract. DIS and are responsible for the regulation of traineeships and apprenticeships in South Australia. If approved, both parties will be notified that the change has occurred.

Workplace changes that may necessitate a change to the CoT include:

- If the employee has a prolonged period away from work
- If the employee moves into a new role within your agency
- If the employee moves into a new role with another SA public sector agency
- If the employee leaves SA public sector employment

To vary a CoT, contact DIS Email: [skills@sa.gov.au](mailto:skills@sa.gov.au) | Infoline: 1800 673 097

## Can a CoT be signed off early?

A training contract can be completed early if all parties agree that the trainee has achieved competency in the workplace and has successfully completed their formal training requirements.

## What are the roles and responsibilities of the GTO and the host agency under Pathway 2?

The GTO:

- is the legal employer and is registered with DIS
- manages recruitment
- is responsible for training arrangements
- manages the CoT and training plan
- provides pastoral care

The Host Agency:

- identifies the training/hosting opportunity
- provides position information to GTO
- is involved in selection process
- provides supervision to the trainee or apprentice
- provides GTO feedback
- pays GTO invoice

## Where can I find more information on the GTO Panel?

Information relating to the use of the Group Training Organisation (GTO) Panel is available on the [DPC Extranet](#) and the [OCPSE website](#).

## What support do agencies receive under the Skilling SA Public Sector Project?

Agencies receive a range of supports under the project from both OCPSE and a GTO depending on which pathway is utilised:

### *Pathway 1 – Public Sector Employed*

- Reimbursement of training costs (up to \$3000 per qualification)
- Recruitment services from GTO (if required)
- Public Sector induction
- Mentoring
- Supervisor training
- Job Seeker Training and Support

### *Pathway 2 – GTO Employed*

- Reimbursement of training costs (up to \$3000 per qualification)
- Recruitment services
- Public Sector induction
- Pastoral care and case management
- Supervisor training
- Job Seeker Training and Support

### *Pathway 3 – Existing Public Sector Employees*

- Reimbursement of training costs (up to \$3000 per qualification)
- Supervisor training

## What costs will the agency be responsible for?

Each public sector agency will be responsible for costs associated with engaging a trainee, including wages or salaries, supervision and on costs. Please refer to the appropriate award for details of training salaries.

### *Example – new trainee (public sector employed)*

An agency employs a new trainee to undertake a Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management. The agency is supported with service costs including recruitment, supervisor training and training costs (subsidised training and support for the training gap fee).

### *Example – new trainee (GTO employed)*

An agency hosts a new trainee who undertakes a Certificate III in Business. The agency will be responsible for paying the GTO as agreed in the Host Agreement and Official Order forms. Costs include (but are not limited to) wages, qualification fees, and pastoral care. The agency receives support for qualification training costs (subsidised training and support for the training gap fee).

### *Example – existing worker*

An existing worker undertakes a Certificate IV in Project Management as part of an agency's skilling and capability building. The agency receives support for qualification training costs (subsidised training and support for the training gap fee).

## How does the agency obtain reimbursement for eligible training?

The agency (via Shared Services) is responsible for paying invoice(s) received from the training provider for training provided. At the end of each quarter OCPSE will confirm participants with the agency and qualifications eligible for training reimbursement under the project. Once confirmed, the agency submits a reimbursement request for training costs paid.

## Can an agency seek reimbursement for costs under the Skilling SA project if an employee withdraws or terminates their contract of training?

Funding through the Skilling Australians Fund National Partnership Agreement is based on achieving agreed milestones. Accordingly, the Department for Innovation and Skills payment model for Skilling South Australia Projects directly links payments to achieving Training Contract Outcomes. Training Contract Outcomes are defined as a training contract commencement, following completion of the probationary period. Contracts of Training that are withdrawn from or terminated before the probationary period is complete, are not counted towards an agency's target nor are they entitled to any reimbursement of costs associated with the training.

### **Do the South Australian Modern Public Sector Enterprise Agreement: Salaried 2017 provisions apply to public sector trainees?**

Yes. Whilst trainees are not covered directly by the [Enterprise Agreement](#), the *Commitment to Ongoing Employment* provision under Clause 10 will continue to apply in relation to agencies employing new trainees (or graduates on a COT as part of Skilling SA allocations).

Clause 10.2 of the Agreement provides:

*“When an employee has been engaged as a trainee in accordance with the Training and Skills Development Act 2008 and has successfully completed their Contract of Training, has satisfactory performance appraisals throughout their employment and upholds the public sector values, the employee will become an ongoing employee pursuant to section 45(2)(a) of the Public Sector Act 2009 from the date of completion of the Contract of Training at the ASO2 classification level or equivalent”.*

### **Are we able to request an employee from the Aboriginal Employment or Disability Employment registers?**

Yes, employees can be sourced from these registers where requested to support inclusion and diversity throughout the public sector.

### **Do trainees employed under the Public Sector Aboriginal Traineeship Program count towards allocation?**

Yes, Aboriginal traineeships count towards an agency's allocation.

### **Do existing public sector employees have to undertake an Upfront Assessment of Need?**

Yes. Completing an Upfront Assessment of Need (UAN) - including the Core Skills Profile for Adults (CSPA) test - is a requirement to receive subsidised training through Skilling South Australia project funding.

While many public sector employees have already studied at a tertiary level, the UAN is designed to maximise success and ensure each student receives any support required.

For more information see the [Upfront Assessment of Need webpage](#) and look for the following documents:

- Upfront Assessment of Need Fact Sheet for Employers.
- Upfront Assessment of Need Fact Sheet for Prospective Students

### **Is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) supported through the project for new and existing workers?**

Yes, RPL is allowed. All training providers are obligated to ask about and offer RPL to all students. As the *Skilling SA Public Sector Project* enables participants to learn new skills and greater support them in their role, if a staff member is able to achieve competency of the qualification through a majority of RPL, then an alternative or higher-level qualification should be considered.

### **Further questions?**

Email: [OCPSEskillingSA@sa.gov.au](mailto:OCPSEskillingSA@sa.gov.au)