



Good practice guide

High-quality traineeships: Identifying what works

Traineeships were introduced alongside apprenticeships to increase the reach of contracted training to a wider range of occupations and industries and to a broader range of learners (particularly women) and to improve the labour market prospects of young people. Traineeships have given hundreds of thousands of Australians access to nationally recognised employment-based training in a wide range of occupational areas. Like apprenticeships, traineeships involve employment with an employer and the delivery of a qualification by a training provider.

As the traineeship system is used by about a quarter of a million Australians at any one time, it is obviously important to achieve high-quality outcomes. This guide is based on research that set out to identify the features of high-quality traineeships and those factors that either facilitate or inhibit their quality. The guide also provides a model of a high-quality traineeship.

Quality features of traineeships

A list of features that impact on the quality experienced in a traineeship lifecycle can be identified and, while all are important, some impact more than others on quality and the overall success of a traineeship. The following table indicates the quality features, organised by level of impact on the quality of the traineeship.

Quality features of traineeships, shown by level of impact

High impact	Medium impact	Low impact
Enterprise enthusiasm and commitment	Careful recruitment and selection of trainees	Contact for trainees with peer cohort
Clear expectations shared among parties	Opportunities for practising skills	RPL available and of high quality
RTO engaged with trainee	Quality of training package	Skills transferable to other occupations and industries
RTO engaged with enterprise		Guidance materials available and utilised to assist people perform their role
Intermediaries engaged with enterprise and trainee		Pathways available to other qualifications
Off-the-job training present and effective		Graduated trainees attractive to other employers
On-the-job training visible (i.e. separate from working) and effective		
RTO and enterprise staff have relevant teaching/training qualifications		
High-quality and freely available learning resources		
Rigorous and relevant assessment methods		
Good work practices in enterprise		
Structures in place to support trainees at work		
Staff in RTO and enterprise skilled in mentoring trainees and shaping work to allow for learning		



This good practice guide is based on the report, *High-quality traineeships: Identifying what works*, by Erica Smith, Paul Comyn, Ros Brennan Kemmis and Andy Smith, and is available from the NCVER website at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2192.html>.

What facilitates and what inhibits these quality features?

Resilience factors

The quality features noted previously are within the control of the various participants—worksites, registered training organisations (RTOs), trainees and intermediary bodies. However, there are four 'quality resilience factors' that may also affect the quality of traineeships. These factors test the commitment and stamina of the participants in producing a high-quality training experience. The four resilience factors are:

- ☑ *The performance of government bodies and intermediaries:* for example, whether a state accreditation body is responsive, or whether an apprenticeship centre provides accurate information
- ☑ *The organisational structure/distribution of workers within an enterprise:* for example, a high level of concentration of trainees at one worksite makes economies of scale possible
- ☑ *The availability of a choice of registered training organisation:* for example, in metropolitan areas there might be a wide choice of registered training organisations, whereas in rural areas there may be very little choice
- ☑ *The availability of funding such as incentives and user choice options:* for example, funding may or may not be available for a particular qualification and/or group of workers.

High-impact quality features, facilitators and inhibitors

The following table presents facilitators and inhibitors for the high-impact and medium-impact quality features. A table for the low-impact features can be found in appendix 6 of the support document to the main report.

Quality feature	Facilitators	Inhibitors ¹
Enterprise motivation/enthusiasm/commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of a champion with a commitment to equity and to the vocation or industry • A shared understanding within the enterprise of its history and values • Expertise in VET available within the enterprise • A clear understanding of the reason for traineeships and accompanying responsibilities • Financial incentives from the government or other sources • Voluntary rather than imposed participation by branches or departments • Internal values-based marketing of traineeships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much red tape
Clear expectations shared among parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and honest communication • Regular meetings • Involvement of the Apprenticeship Centre beyond sign-up • Delineation of responsibilities as well as rights • Greater national consistency • Networking among RTOs and/or employers and/or intermediary organisations to share experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear information about traineeships • Over-marketing • Mixed messages from different parties
Engagement of RTO with trainee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High commitment by RTO to quality training • Reciprocal commitment by enterprise • Proximity • Low student–staff ratios • Utilisation of technologies as a complementary method 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor negotiation of access • Poor forward planning
Engagement of RTO with enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High commitment by RTO to quality training • Reciprocal commitment by enterprise • Proximity • Embedding RTO within enterprises—history with the enterprise and offering a range of qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor negotiation of access • Poor forward planning

¹ Some inhibitors are simply the reverse of facilitators; to avoid repetition these are not all recorded in the table.

Quality feature	Facilitators	Inhibitors
Engagement of intermediaries with enterprise and trainee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High commitment to quality traineeships by intermediaries • Reciprocal commitment by enterprise • Proximity • Customer service orientation by intermediaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor negotiation of access • Poor forward planning • Limited intermediary understanding of enterprise and trainee needs
Extent and effectiveness of off-the-job training	<p>Off-site delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements of training package • Availability of RTOs with the appropriate qualification within scope • Availability of flexible delivery • Commitment of employer to time release • Adequate funding <p>On-site delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect of enterprise for underpinning knowledge • Skills and respect of workers for the trainer • Structured training sessions • Suitable training room • Obvious link to job tasks 	<p>Off-site delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rurality/remoteness/poor transport • Thin market • Wide distribution of workers geographically <p>On-site delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production pressures • Supervisor opposition
Extent and effectiveness of on-the-job training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of on-the-job trainers/supervisors who are ex-trainees • Careful recruitment and training of supervisors • Support for supervisors, e.g. guidance materials • Appropriateness of training package and electives for the job roles • Provision of a broad range of experience within work area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry traditions that do not value on-the-job development • On-the-job trainers/supervisors with no formal training in workplace training
Qualified staff (RTO, enterprise)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTOs able to attract and support specialised staff • Metropolitan area RTO, or more choice of RTO • Large size RTO or smaller niche RTO • Tradition of training in the industry area • On-the-job trainers/supervisors with technical ability and willingness to continue learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTO too generic and too broad • Thin market • Skill shortage in local/national VET and/or industry area
Quality and availability of learning resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTO awareness of industry and enterprise contexts and conditions and work processes • Resources tailored to traineeship cohorts • Regular review of resources to ensure continuous improvement and currency • Large customers • Existence of large industry bodies • Availability of funds and trained RTO staff for the production of sufficient materials • Recruitment of skilled and highly qualified staff and availability of professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on training package support materials and other generic materials • Lack of established industry body of knowledge
Assessment rigour and relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good understanding by RTO management and trainers of industry and workplace • High level of skills and knowledge by RTO trainers of assessment theory and training packages • Availability of time and resources within RTO to develop assessment tasks and regimes • Full range of experiences in enterprise and /or RTO to enable assessment in all areas • Quality control and good record-keeping within RTO • Involvement of assessors in professional development and networks 	

Quality feature	Facilitators	Inhibitors
Good work practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality management • Profitability • Skilled and well-trained existing staff • A culture and commitment that values good training • A culture and commitment that values OH&S • High-quality human resource systems • A willingness to change, e.g. to seek out and adopt new technology • A shared vision among employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tendency to 'cut corners'
Structures to support trainees at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance management for supervisors that rewards trainee management skills • Working hours that allow for easy access to trainees • Tailoring training and support sessions to shifts • Clearly defined job descriptions that align with the traineeship qualifications • Mentoring/buddying systems • Valuing of mentoring, buddying roles • Public acknowledgement of achievement/merit/progression, e.g. graduation ceremonies • Excess capacity that allows for learning time and permits mistakes • A structured system for review and reflection • Paying casual staff to attend off-the-job training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor work organisation • Lack of operating procedures

Medium-impact quality features, facilitators and inhibitors

Opportunities to practise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large and diverse worksite • Willingness of employer to rotate among tasks • Supervisor's ability to train 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast pace of work • OH&S regulation and/or licensing • Low profit margin
Careful recruitment and selection of trainees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established HR function and/or manager • Identification of characteristics of potentially successful trainee • Employer willingness to take risks • Involvement of other relevant parties, e.g. families, committees of industry people • Recruiting via workers' own networks • Building on school-enterprise relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight labour market • Small or medium enterprise • Lack of enterprise knowledge of traineeships
Quality of training package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high level of consultation and ongoing dialogue • Regular review • Willingness of registered training organisations and enterprises to engage with the training package 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adversarial relationships among training package stakeholders

Using the facilitators and inhibitors to identify and improve quality in the traineeship

The list of facilitators and inhibitors can be used as a tool for identifying the quality of a traineeship. If a traineeship is seen to have, or to be able to develop, a number of 'facilitators', then it is likely to be high quality. If on the other hand it exhibits, or is likely to develop, a number of 'inhibitors', then it is likely to be of lower quality. The presence of a large number of facilitators in high-impact features will make up for inhibitors in low-impact features.

The table may also be used as a continuous improvement tool, where employers, enterprises, registered training organisations, group training organisations and Australian Apprenticeship Centres can work together or separately to identify areas that need to be improved.

For the most complete picture, the table should be used in conjunction with the four 'resilience factors' mentioned earlier since they provide the environment in which the traineeship may flourish or wither.

Characteristics of a model traineeship

Using these facilitators and inhibitors, we can produce an overview of the characteristics of a model traineeship in each of the four phases of the traineeship lifecycle—recruitment, sign-up and induction; training delivery and assessment; support during the traineeship; and completion and beyond.

Our model indicates those characteristics *necessary* for a high-quality traineeship and those *ideally* present.

Phase 1: Recruitment; sign-up; induction

Necessary

- ☑ Prior to recruitment, the registered training organisation and intermediaries learn about the organisation's workplace to ensure that the traineeship adds value to both the enterprise and the individual.
- ☑ The registered training organisation works with the employer and the supervisor to select the qualification and units of competency for the traineeship, ensuring they are relevant to both the enterprise and the future career intentions of the trainee.
- ☑ The registered training organisation and intermediaries meet with the employer, supervisor and trainee to establish a partnership and provide advice to the enterprise and the trainee.
- ☑ The employer and immediate supervisor demonstrate a strong commitment to the success of the traineeship, with the trainer, trainee and supervisor clear about the expected outcomes and their responsibilities.
- ☑ The employer conducts an induction/orientation session for the new trainee or trainees.

Ideal

- ☑ The registered training organisation and employer only recruit trainees who are clearly suited to the industry and have the ability to succeed in the program. Parents of younger applicants are involved in the recruitment phase to provide support and motivation during the life of the traineeship.
- ☑ The training organisation provides the trainee with a resource pack containing all learning materials and assessment tools.
- ☑ Staff from state training agencies provide support and guidance to registered training organisations, employers and supervisors on best-practice traineeship delivery.

Phase 2: Training delivery and assessment

Necessary

- ☑ The registered training organisation and employer agree on a program of on- and off-the-job training, with the training organisation offering tailored delivery and assessment suited to each workplace. The

training organisation uses recognition of prior learning appropriately to encourage trainee engagement and articulation into further traineeship pathways.

- ☑ The training organisation works with the employer to ensure that any in-house employer training is embedded in the traineeship.
- ☑ The employer ensures that time is set aside for training—on the job, in the workplace or off site. The employer makes sure that the trainee is given opportunities for practice.
- ☑ The employer ensures that all worksites operate according to good working practices and conditions, with good practice modelled in the workplace to provide a consistent message for the trainee.
- ☑ The employer ensures that the trainee is closely supported by mentors or buddies, with supervisors spending time with trainees to mentor and encourage their learning.
- ☑ Trainers are enthusiastic about the field of study and keep up with rapidly evolving technology and work practices.
- ☑ The training organisation uses high-quality and current learning materials relevant to the trainee's workplace and with a strong emphasis on OH&S. Both the training organisation and employer ensure that training and assessment materials are customised to the specific workplace activities.
- ☑ Assessment is holistic and relevant to the workplace, while avoiding over-customisation.
- ☑ *Where the traineeship is fully on the job, the employer and registered training organisation work together to deliver well-structured on-the-job training, with the employer developing a clearly articulated on-the-job curriculum or program of activities, while the training organisation staff scaffold the learner's use of workbooks and learning materials rather than just expecting them to complete written tasks.*
- ☑ *Where there is off-the-job training conducted at a registered training organisation, the trainers impart a coherent body of underpinning knowledge to trainees during off-the-job training and use authentic simulated environments to provide trainees with opportunities for practice. Employers ensure that the release of trainees is a priority even during busy times.*

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Ideal

- ☑ The registered training organisation offers flexible learning options to suit trainee and enterprise needs. The organisation facilitates literacy and numeracy support where necessary.
- ☑ Employers rotate trainees among different departments or worksites (or with other employers through group training) to access the full range of experiences and opportunities for practice.

Phase 3: Support during the traineeship

Necessary

- ☑ Intermediaries develop good ongoing relations with employers and build trust with managers, supervisors and trainees, providing accurate, current, and appropriate information.
- ☑ Registered training organisation staff undertake frequent visits to the trainee's workplace to ensure on-the-job trainees are satisfied with their learning and their daily work.
- ☑ For traineeships involving off-the-job training, training organisation staff contact employers regularly to discuss the trainee's progress and ensure that off-the-job training is relevant to the trainee's workplace.
- ☑ Employers and supervisors provide regular and ongoing feedback to trainees.

Ideal

- ☑ Employers, supervisors and mentors use the clear and specific information and support materials provided by intermediaries.
- ☑ The employer and trainee enter into an explicit contract that covers the traineeship. The contract links the traineeship to career and salary progression in the industry.
- ☑ The training organisation, employer and/or intermediary provide career counselling and pastoral care as appropriate to the trainee during the traineeship.

Phase 4: Completion and beyond

Necessary

- ☑ Both training organisation and intermediary staff work with the employer, supervisor and trainee to ensure completion of the traineeship, making sure that all assessment tasks are completed and that the trainee feels confident in each area covered.
- ☑ The parties participate in a comprehensive evaluation of the traineeship and review findings collectively to ensure continuous improvement purposes.

Ideal

- ☑ The employer and training organisation work with the trainee to establish further education and training pathways.
- ☑ Training organisation staff arrange articulation into another traineeship or apprenticeship and/or enrolment into further education and training.
- ☑ Employers provide signposted pathways to more senior jobs in the enterprise and opportunities for the attainment of higher qualifications.

The report and support document for *High quality traineeships: Identifying what works* are available on the NCVET website at: <<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2192.html>>.



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