



FAST-TRACK APPRENTICESHIPS PROGRAM

INFORMATION FOR REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

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1 FAST-TRACK APPRENTICESHIPS PROGRAM

1.1 Overview

Australia needs a skilled and knowledgeable workforce, capable of meeting the current and future demands of industry. One way to achieve this is to encourage greater participation in apprenticeships by removing time-based restrictions on qualifications.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has significant funding available for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and lead organisations to develop and implement Fast-Track Apprenticeship (FTA) projects which demonstrate innovation and broker accelerated learning models to address the continuing need of industry and employers for highly skilled apprentices. Employers and RTOs will be encouraged during this period to adopt an appropriate demonstration model for their industry which embeds and further systemises these accelerated learning models in the training sector.

1.2 Objective of the Fast-Track Apprenticeships Program

The overall objective of FTA is to increase the number of qualified tradespeople gaining employment in industries experiencing skill shortages. Funding is provided to RTOs to work in partnership with industry and/or local employers to develop and implement apprenticeship pathways that reduce the time taken to complete entire apprenticeships (not just off-the-job components) in a way that ensures quality and meets the needs of industry, employers and apprentices.

FTA increases opportunities for apprentices to be signed off when they are competent, reducing the amount of time taken to complete apprenticeships. This is because all references to fixed durations for apprentices have now been removed from legislation, regulations and awards covering apprenticeships as a result of work undertaken by the Council of Australian Governments.

Employers and apprentices will benefit from this initiative as they will have a more highly skilled workforce, more quickly. Therefore apprentices will be able to complete their apprenticeships when they are competent, rather than when they have served the time deemed necessary to complete the qualification.

1.3 Applications for Funding

You may apply for funding under FTA at any time throughout the year. Projects may commence at any time during the year and will be funded for up to 12 months. To apply, read this information document and complete the **Fast-Track Apprenticeships - Application for Funding**. Applications should be emailed to: fast-track@deewr.gov.au.

1.4 Eligibility

Only RTOs that have the scope to deliver the apprenticeship/s for which they are applying for are eligible for funding. Projects funded will:

- (a) reduce the total time taken to complete an apprenticeship. This can include but is not limited to:
 - (i) varying the duration of on-the-job and/or off-the-job training
 - (ii) accelerated learning programs
 - (iii) recognition of prior learning
 - (iv) gap-training programs
 - (v) development of resources to support flexible learning and assessments
 - (vi) use of flexible learning and assessment arrangements
 - (vii) workplace mentoring strategies
- (b) ensure that apprentices, employers and industry retain confidence in the quality of training and assessment;

- (c) help to promote the status of trades; and
- (d) increase apprentice retention rates.

The proposed projects should present creative, innovative and sustainable solutions that will contribute to long-term cultural change and reduce perceived and actual barriers to the timely competency-based completion of apprenticeships.

2 FUNDING

2.1 Funding for RTOs

RTOs must be delivering apprenticeship training to be eligible for funding. Payments will be made directly to the RTO which will be responsible for distribution of funds to any other stakeholders in the project. RTOs will need to provide a detailed budget for the amount of funding being sought and also provide information about how the funds will be used. Funding will not be provided to directly subsidise the cost of training delivery.

2.2 Applicability of GST for State entities

RTOs that are State or Territory Government entities applying for funding from the program should seek their own legal advice if funding received would be exempt from GST in accordance with section 9-15(3)(c) of the GST Act.

2.3 Funding agreements

Successful RTOs will be required to enter into a funding agreement with DEEWR and the application for funding will form the basis of the funding agreement. DEEWR will monitor each project, evaluate and assess the impact and success of the funded activities. The monitoring requirements will be detailed in the funding agreement.

2.4 Project Duration

The duration of the funding agreement will be determined on a case-by-case basis but would normally be for a 12 month period.

2.5 Other agreements

Any agreement(s) between the RTO and other parties participating in the FTA project are the responsibility of the individual parties involved. DEEWR accepts no liability for these other agreements.

2.6 Other incentives

Eligibility for any other apprenticeship incentives that successful RTOs and/or partner organisations remains unaffected by the provision of FTA project funding.

3 PROCESS

3.1 Submitting an Application for Funding

To apply for funding, RTOs should complete **Fast-Track Apprenticeships - Application for Funding**. You may submit applications to the department at any time of the year by emailing your application to: fast-track@deewr.gov.au.

3.2 Industry and/or employer engagement

Evidence of engagement with industry and/or employer(s) associated with the apprenticeship to be fast-tracked must be provided with the application for funding. Acceptable evidence may include, but is not limited to previous experience and accelerated learning models developed as a result of earlier FTA projects, as well as letters from industry and/or employers, outlining their understanding and support for the proposed project.

3.3 Applications for funding for multiple fast-track projects

Applications will be considered from RTOs seeking funding for more than one FTA project but DEEWR is not bound to accept or fund any or all of the proposals from that organisation.

RTOs seeking funding for more than one FTA project must submit separate applications for funding. When more than one application from an RTO is selected for funding, DEEWR will enter into separate funding agreements for each project.

4 ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING

4.1 Minimum content and format requirements

DEEWR has developed a form that must be used to submit your application. It is the *Fast-Track Apprenticeships – Application for funding* and it is available from www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/RTO/Fast_track.asp.

4.2 Assessment of applications

DEEWR may consult with other Commonwealth agencies, DEEWR's contractors and advisers, the responsible Ministers and their advisers. We reserve the right to seek any information from any source about any organisation/person submitting or involved in an application for funding.

We may also take into account other considerations such as financial viability (including bankruptcy or insolvency of the respondent), sanctions against the respondent under AQTF 2007, significant deficiencies in performance of any substantive requirement or obligation under a prior contract and compliance with Commonwealth legislation and policies.

4.3 Selection criteria

Please note that funding under FTA is competitive and awarded on merit on a project by project basis. Addressing and meeting the selection criteria is not a guarantee of funding.

Applications will be assessed using the criteria below:

Innovation

Extent to which the proposed approach uses innovative strategies, resources or activities to achieve its objectives.

Industry and/or employer engagement

Extent to which industry and employers will be involved in the project and how the training to be delivered meets the requirements of the participating employer/industry.

Reduction in time for completion of apprenticeships

Capacity of the proposed approach to reduce the timeframe for competency-based completion of apprenticeships whilst maintaining (or improving) quality.

Addressing demand for apprenticeships

Clearly demonstrated link to demand for skilled tradespeople in the industry and region being serviced.

Increasing the status of apprenticeships

Extent to which the activity will increase the status of apprenticeships.

Increasing completion rates for apprenticeships

Extent to which the activity will contribute to the number of apprentices completing apprenticeships.

Sustainability

Evidence that the approach will contribute to more timely completion of apprenticeships in the long term including the extent to which the proposal will:

- reduce any perceived or actual barriers in training, industry, employment or within the community to the timely competency-based completion of apprenticeships
- change attitudes or behaviours of key stakeholders
- contribute to the ongoing implementation of the competency-based training model proposed.

Value for money

Evidence that grant funding will contribute directly to achievement of objectives. The extent to which value for money is enhanced through contributions (which can be in-kind) from other parties participating in the fast-track apprenticeship activity.

5 OTHER

5.1 Compliance with Commonwealth Legislation and Policies

Successful applicants must comply with the Commonwealth legislation and policies listed below. Specific compliance is listed in the funding agreement between DEEWR and successful applicants.

Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999

Workplace Relations Act 1996

Freedom of Information Act 1982

Privacy Act 1988

Auditor General Act 1997

Ombudsman Act 1976

Charter of United Nations Act 1945 and the Charter of United Nations (Terrorism and Dealing with Assets) Regulations 2002

Chapter 7 of the *Commonwealth Criminal Code*

5.2 Process for submitting funding application

Applications for funding should be lodged with DEEWR via email at fast-track@deewr.gov.au. Applications for funding should be submitted in either Word or RTF format using the pro-forma provided '**Fast-Track Apprenticeships - Application for Funding**' that can be downloaded from www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/RTO/Fast_track.asp

5.3 Contact information

Further information about the Fast-Track Apprenticeships Program can be obtained by contacting:

Fast-Track Hotline: 02 6240 5985
Email: fast-track@deewr.gov.au