



Preparing a successful Minister's Awards for Excellence for Employers of Australian Apprentices Application Form

This information sheet provides advice about writing your application for the Minister's Awards for Excellence for Employers of Australian Apprentices.

Before you start writing your application

The important question to ask yourself before you start writing your application is "What does our business do which demonstrates "excellence" in the way we employ and train apprentices and/or trainees?" Make a list of all of the major training initiatives your business has implemented and any successful business outcomes achieved as a result of employing apprentices and/or trainees. You may want to brainstorm with a group of people from your business just to make sure you don't miss anything.

Make sure you also keep in mind your audience – the judging panel. What is main impression you want to give them about your business? Judging panels are made up of at least one industry representative from your local area, a Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) representative and, in most cases, the winner of the previous *Minister's Award for Excellence for Employers of Australian Apprentices* from your region.

Your Australian Apprenticeships Centre representative can help you prepare your application and we encourage you to seek their assistance.

Referees

Your application form needs to be endorsed by two referees, one of which is required to be a apprentice and/or trainee who has been employed by your business (please note: the apprentice and/or trainee referee must have been employed by your organisation as an apprentice and/or trainee at some stage between 1 January 2007 and 31 January 2008). You may like to invite your one or both referees to provide input or feedback on your application before you submit it. Referees may be contacted by the judging panel to provide more information if it is required.

Writing your application

Some points to consider while writing you application.

- It is important to support your claims with relevant and tangible examples that will be understood by the judging panel.
- Remember – the judges may not necessarily be familiar with your industry so try to use plain English and avoid the use of industry jargon.
- You can use either full sentences or dot points.
- Try and keep your answers concise, to the point and avoid repeating the same example.

Question 1

An induction process doesn't necessarily need to be a formal process. It can be an arrangement where a new person is introduced to the business in an informal way. For example, new people to your business may be introduced to a "buddy" who is a more experienced person in the company and who spends the first few weeks/months showing the new person how things are done. As well as providing information on your general induction process, make sure you provide some specific examples of how you induct your apprentices and/or trainees.

Question 2

This question is trying to ascertain whether training is an integral and on-going part of your business. As with Question 1, training programmes can be formal or informal. Include information about the specific types of training your apprentices and/or trainees undertake as well as the training undertaken by the entire organisation (formal and informal).

Question 3

In addition to the examples listed on the application form, you may like to also include any additional Australian Government initiatives your apprentices and/or trainees receive. For example, Tools for Your Trade, the Commonwealth Trade Learning Scholarship or Living Away From Home Allowance.

Question 4

Like training and induction programs, mentoring can be a formal or an informal arrangement. In addition, your apprentice and/or trainee may have different mentors for different aspects of their work. For example, their supervisor may provide mentoring for career advancement in the organisation while a more senior person from a different part of the organisation may provide mentoring about the broader aspects of your industry.

Question 5

It is important for apprentices and/or trainees to provide feedback on the training component of their apprenticeship and/or traineeship. Provide examples of how your apprentice and/or trainee is able to provide feedback whether formally (eg. a staff survey), informally (eg. a regular chat with their supervisor) or via another avenue.

Question 6

Increasing the retention rates of apprentices and/or trainees is a key objective of the Australian Government. In this section, use examples of how your business assists your apprentices and/or trainees to complete their training (both on and off the job).

Question 7

This question is the most important on the application form. This is your opportunity to explain to the judges the way in which your business demonstrates excellence in the way it trains and employs apprentices and/or trainees.

It is important to provide actual examples of how excellence is demonstrated and how it has been of benefit to your business or your wider community eg. staff retention, improved productivity, increased profitability, improvement in quality, better work-life balance.

Before you submit your application

- Read through your application and correct any spelling or grammatical errors. Then ask another person to do the same.
- Make sure you have answered all the parts of the application form.
- Make sure you have two referees (one of which needs to be an Australian Apprentice who is or has been employed by your business in the past twelve months).
- Check the contact details for your business on the front page of the application – are they correct?
- If you are working with your Australian Apprenticeships Centre, have they completed their part of the application form?