



Aboriginal Traineeship Program

A guide for agencies and
workplace supervisors

Enquiries:

Diversity and Employment

Public Sector Commission

Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street, WEST PERTH WA 6005

Locked Bag 3002, WEST PERTH WA 6872

Telephone: (08) 6552 8500

Fax: (08) 6552 8710

Email: aboriginalemployment@psc.wa.gov.au

Website: www.publicsector.wa.gov.au

© State of Western Australia 2018

There is no objection to this publication being copied in whole or part, provided there is due acknowledgement of any material quoted or reproduced.

Published by the Public Sector Commission, January, 2018.

This publication is available on the Public Sector Commission website at www.publicsector.wa.gov.au

Disclaimer

The Western Australian Government is committed to quality service to its customers and makes every attempt to ensure accuracy, currency and reliability of the information contained in this publication. However, changes in circumstances over time may impact on the veracity of this information.

Accessibility

Copies of this publication are available in alternative formats upon request.

Contents

- Introduction 4**
- Program outline..... 5**
 - Phase 1: Attraction, selection and recruitment..... 5**
 - Phase 2: Induction session..... 5**
 - Phase 3: Traineeship commencement and placement 6**
 - Phase 4: Traineeship completion..... 6**
- Roles and responsibilities for program 7**
 - Public Sector Commission 7**
 - Host agency 8**
 - Registered Training Organisation 8**
 - Trainees..... 9**
- Workplace supervisors..... 10**
 - Supervisor responsibilities..... 10**
 - Day-to-day work..... 11**
 - Dealing with workplace issues 13**
- Qualification 14**
 - Training contracts 14**
 - Qualification..... 14**
 - Competencies 15**
 - Learning outcomes..... 15**
 - Working with the RTO 15**
- Frequently asked questions..... 17**
- Definitions..... 20**
- Further Information..... 22**

Introduction

The State Government of Western Australia has a long history of undertaking initiatives to improve employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (respectfully referred to in this guide as Aboriginal people). As the largest employer in WA, the public sector is well-placed to provide improved employment opportunities for Aboriginal people, with a commitment under the [*Attract, appoint and advance: An employment strategy for Aboriginal people*](#).

The Aboriginal Traineeship Program was established in 2012 as an initiative to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal people. The program is an integrated employment, training, mentoring and support service; and is centrally coordinated and funded by the Public Sector Commission.

This program provides a unique and valuable opportunity for Aboriginal youth, 24 years of age or younger across metropolitan and regional locations, to undertake a government traineeship while placed in a public sector agency. The program aims to develop the skills, experience and knowledge of young Aboriginal people and prepare them to embark on a career in the public sector. On successful completion of the 12-month traineeship, participants will receive a nationally accredited Certificate III in Government (Public Administration).

Since its inception, the program has provided training and employment opportunities for more than 300 promising young Aboriginal people to undertake a public sector traineeship, begin their career and continues to provide opportunities as they work to progress in the sector.

Program outline

The Commission is responsible for coordinating the program and includes:

- organising training
- workshops
- providing ongoing advice and mentoring support
- liaising regularly with both trainees and agency supervisors
- meeting ongoing costs.

The program is comprised of four phases as outlined below.

Phase 1: Attraction, selection and recruitment

The first stage of this phase is to seek potential trainees across both metropolitan and regional areas.

Concurrently, expressions of interest will be sought from agencies to participate as 'host agencies'. The Commission will select agencies that meet the required criteria and undertake a matching process to allocate successful candidates based on a number of factors, but not limited to, career aspirations and location preference.

Following this recruitment and allocation process, an information session will be held prior to the induction program for both parties. It is essential that the host agencies attend as they will receive important documents including their allocated trainee's resume.

Those deemed suitable to undertake a Government traineeship will be employed by the Commission on a fixed-term contract of appointment, for the length of the traineeship in line with section 64(1)(b) of the [Public Sector Management Act 1994](#).

Phase 2: Induction session

Trainees will complete a three day induction session run by the Commission. This session will focus on workplace readiness and preparing trainees to work in a public sector environment. Agency supervisors will be invited to attend the last day of induction to meet the trainee before the commencement of the traineeship.

Phase 3: Traineeship commencement and placement

Trainees will commence their placement in the week following their induction. Anticipated to commence in May 2018, across both metropolitan and regional areas.

The host agency placement relies on a secondment arrangement in line with Section 66 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*. Under the terms of the secondment, the Commission will meet all salary and training costs for the trainee and will continue to retain oversight of their employment arrangement for the duration of the traineeship.

The Commission's allocated Aboriginal mentors¹ (mentors) will conduct regular workplace visits to support both the agency and the trainee throughout the duration of the traineeship, with the Commission always available for consultation.

Phase 4: Traineeship completion

To complete the requirements for the qualification, all trainees must:

- successfully complete all core and elective units
- complete all workplace tasks allocated by the host agency supervisor, which are aligned with the competency and assessment requirements for the Certificate III in Government (Public Administration) that are to industry standards
- a complete evidence based portfolio of daily work completed aligned to the assessment requirements
- undertake workplace assessment by the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) assessor.

On successful completion, trainees will be awarded a Certificate III in Government (Public Administration), and will be supported in securing ongoing employment. If the host agency is unable to offer ongoing employment, trainees will be offered the option to register with the [Trainee Transition to Employment, Recruitment and Referral Service \(TTERRS\)](#).

¹ The Aboriginal mentors are experienced employees from within the Commission who provide trainees with support and guidance through the duration of the program. The mentors will conduct workplace visits on a regular basis to ensure the trainee settles into the workplace and is progressing well against the required competencies.

Roles and responsibilities for program

Public Sector Commission

As part of the Commission's commitment to providing sustainable employment opportunities for Aboriginal people across the public sector, the Commission will meet the costs associated with the program, including trainee wages and training delivery.

The Commission will also be responsible for:

- recruiting trainees and assigning host agencies
- engaging an RTO to deliver the requirements for the Certificate III in Government (Public Administration)
- delivering information sessions for candidates and agencies in the metropolitan region (including disseminated to regional candidates)
- providing trainees with an induction prior to commencement of their traineeship
- providing mentoring and support to trainees through allocated Aboriginal Mentors
- providing consultation, advice and support to agencies
- coordinating relevant training sessions for trainees and supervisors
- assisting in trainees identifying ongoing employment opportunities within the public sector upon successful completion of their traineeship
- hosting a graduation ceremony for trainees who successfully complete their traineeship.

Host agency

The program is intended to be a collaborative arrangement between the Commission and agencies hosting trainees (via a secondment arrangement) for the 12-month duration of the traineeship. Much of the program's success stems from the support and commitment provided by host agencies.

The agency will be responsible for:

- providing trainees with an agency-specific induction
- nominating a supervisor to allocate tasks and provide support to trainees
- working with the mentors to monitor progress and identify any workplace issue/s
- identifying employment opportunities within the agency for trainees who successfully complete their traineeship
- providing a minimum four week notice to the Commission should the agency wish to cease their hosting arrangement.

The Commission's expectations is that all agencies demonstrate a strong commitment to support their allocated trainee/s for the duration of the program to promote positive employment outcomes. Cessation of the hosting arrangement should only occur in exception circumstances.

Registered Training Organisation

The Commission will engage an RTO to provide the formal qualification element of the Program. The RTO will be responsible for:

- drafting a training plan which will specify the competencies the trainee will be required to achieve during the traineeship, in order to be awarded the qualification
- allocating an assessor for each trainee who will assess competencies in the workplace and provide relevant support/guidance to trainees and agencies
- monitoring trainee progress towards completing their qualification
- issuing trainees with their qualification upon successful completion.

Trainees

The trainee's commitment and hard work is the foundation for success in this program.

Trainees will be responsible for:

- making a commitment to a full-time traineeship for a period of up to 12-months
- undertaking relevant and meaningful training and learning opportunities
- completing core and elective units to meet the requirements for the Certificate III in Government (Public Administration), work for which will be assessed by an RTO assessor through regular assessment visits
- attending all meetings, training sessions, information sessions and assessment visits
- submitting timesheets and leave forms on time and according to specified deadlines
- raising any issues that may impact upon their traineeship progress with their mentor or supervisor.
- adhering to the Commission's and host agency's policies
- abiding to workplace health and safety rules and standards
- attending and perform work as directed by the supervisor
- behaving in a professional manner and act with integrity
- working towards achieving the Certificate III in Government (Public Administration)
- undertaking required training and assessments as per the training plan
- notifying the host agency if they are absent from work or running late
- notifying the Commission, host agency and RTO of any changes to personal details.

Workplace supervisors

The workplace supervisor plays a pivotal role in the trainee's journey during the program. The supervisor has an opportunity to make a positive impact in a young individual's life and be a guide as they navigate their time in the workplace.

Effective supervisors will not only up skill their trainee but also optimise learning opportunities for both parties involved.

Supervisor responsibilities

The supervisor will be responsible for:

- ensuring trainees are exposed to suitable meaningful and relevant administrative tasks, integrated learning into work activities
- supporting trainees to complete the units towards the Certificate III in Government (Public Administration) and familiarising self with assessment material
- advising the Commission about the trainee's performance and progress
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment including acknowledging regular feedback and encouragement
- giving recognition for their achievements, even in a small team environment
- ensuring timesheets and leave forms are completed accurately and submitted to the Commission in a timely manner as per the Commission's policies
- identifying and resolving any problems before they affect work performance and relationships (the Commission's mentors will provide support to resolve any issues and also work to identify any issues)
- notifying the Commission of any trainee absences and consulting if there are issues.

Many perceive that the role of being a supervisor is an additional responsibility, however there are many benefits to being a workplace supervisor including:

- witnessing a young individual develop their skills and gain confidence
- having an opportunity to develop their own skills in leadership, mentorship and communication.

Day-to-day work

The introduction to the workplace

Trainees go through a long recruitment process in order to gain a place in the program. Their first day of work is one to celebrate and it is important to make them feel welcome. It is also important to remember that the majority of trainees have never worked a public sector agency or often any workplace before, therefore is a new experience for them.

As stated previously, the Commission will conduct an induction program which will give a holistic overview of working in the sector and an office environment. Therefore, it is vital that an agency specific induction is conducted. As with any new employee, conducting an induction process needs to provide the trainee/s with a clear picture of the agency, what is expected of them, what to expect of others and is an important part of the onboarding process.

The induction can convey the agency's culture, priorities and objectives which will allow the trainee to also reflect upon whether they are interested in working long term at the agency. It is also important to conduct introductions to the workplace to encourage and build positive workplace relationships.

On the first day, ensure that the following is covered:

- tour of workplace facilities
- basic work rules and conditions (e.g. hours of work, use of mobile phones, leave provisions, who to contact if running late, what to do if they have a question)
- health and safety procedures
- an overview of the agency including organisational structure, objectives and key initiatives and how the trainee's role and work contributes
- what to do if they have a workplace issue
- information on the agency's policies and procedures and where to locate them

Get to know the trainee by asking what they hope to gain from the program, their experience in the workplace, their skills and career aspirations.

This may be a lot of information for the trainee/s to absorb all at once, so try not to overwhelm or isolate them.

Allocating work

There is no set way in allocating work to trainees, however it is expected you take into consideration the following:

1. assume the trainee has is no prior knowledge unless stated otherwise
2. explain the task, its purpose and why it needs to be done
3. explain all the steps to be completed to finish the task
4. use clear and simple language (write down instructions if required)
5. ask questions to check their undertaking (demonstrate if required)

6. include safe work practices in instructions (e.g. using a guillotine)
7. encourage them to check the work before confirming they have completed the task (verbally or in writing).

Suitable tasks

Each agency will have different operation requirements, and there are various tasks that may be allocated to the trainee. While there is not a limit to the tasks, agencies are reminded that a trainee is not there to replace a full-time worker. However, the Commission does encourage tasks that up-skill the trainee and provide challenges to broaden their learning experience. The RTO will also be available to assist agencies in allocating suitable tasks in relation to the qualification.

General tasks that may be suitable including (but are not limited to):

- administrative tasks including processing, stationary orders, checklists, reception support
- research tasks including gathering quotes for activities
- occupational Health and Safety including maintain first aid register, conducting audits of first aid boxes, workplace checklist
- writing tasks including simple memos.

Timesheets

Consistent with all public sector employees, all trainees are required to keep a timesheet and submit it to the Commission at the end of the settlement period. The Commission will supply a blank timesheet to trainees. It is the trainee's responsibility to complete and submit an accurate timesheet. Supervisors are required to check and approve the timesheet to ensure its accuracy before submission.

In exceptional circumstances where a trainee is close to, or has exhausted, all of their leave entitlements; the Commission may place them on a payment of salary via a fortnightly timesheet arrangement to avoid potential overpayments. This means that the trainee is paid based on the hours actually worked over this period as documented on the timesheet.

Dealing with workplace issues

Trainees may experience unexpected circumstances impact on their traineeship and agency placement. Examples of issues that could be of concern are:

- non-attendance or poor punctuality
- failure to make progress with work or training
- personality clashes with other team members
- poor standard of work
- breaches of workplace policy.

Supervisors have a role to identify issues as they arise and mitigate these to lessen the insurances of trainees making poor progress. In most cases, issues can be resolved informally at the agency level. In dealing with a trainee and workplace issues, agencies are encouraged to:

- identify and communicate these issues as early as possible with the trainee
- continuously provide positive and constructive feedback through the program
- remain calm and be clear when dealing with an issue
- give opportunity for them to learn from their mistake
- take into account their experience in the workplace and their age as some may require more guidance and may not have realise there is an issue
- be fair in the decision making, adhering to natural justice and allowing the trainee a chance to respond.

All issues should be relayed to the Commission's mentors at the regular meetings. If a significant problem arises that needs to be discussed, it is ideal to notify the trainee ahead of time to schedule a meeting to allow both parties to reflect and to manage any strong emotions that may be present. Given the Commission's role as the trainee's employer, all serious matters must be raised with the Commission immediately.

Understand that it may be daunting for a trainee to be confronted, so ensure to book an area where they would feel comfortable—and if required—offer to bring a third party such as the mentor in as support.

For the duration of the program, the Commission's team are able to discuss and provide further consultation should any issues be raised.

Qualification

Training contracts

The Commission will liaise with Australian Apprenticeship Centre (AAC) to register the trainee. The AAC will set up a training contract between the Commission and trainee, and lodge the contract with the [Apprenticeship Office](#).

It is the responsibility of the Commission and host agency to ensure trainees are exposed to meaningful and relevant government administrative tasks during the traineeship. The Commission will coordinate off-the-job training to compliment the on-the-job training conducted by the host agency.

Qualification

All trainees will work towards a Certificate III in Government (Public Administration). The RTO will work alongside the Commission in selecting suitable elective units for the trainee (total of 11 units, 7 core and 4 elective)

The RTO will complete a training plan identifying these units and to specify competencies the trainee will need to complete. Trainees will be provided assessment evidence guides to link the learning outcomes of the competencies to the workplace.

Competencies will be assessed by the RTO in the workplace. Assessment requirements are based on the trainee's ability to complete a task or job function consistently over a period of time and to the required standard. Trainees are assessed by building portfolios of evidence from their daily work which aligns with the assessment requirements.

The host agency will be required to provide the trainee tasks to align to the competencies within the qualification. An example may be:

- PSPGOV312A Use workplace communication strategies
 - Providing supportive administrative role.
 - Producing correspondence, including Microsoft excel spread sheets, letters and emails.

Competencies

Competencies are the units of work which need to be completed, assessed and recognised in order to achieve the qualification. The program is based on learning and development from a combination of structured learning and on-the-job experience.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes on the other hand, are statements that describe significant and essential learning that trainees should achieve or understand at the end of a unit or program.

Completing the program will prepare trainees for a career in the public sector and develop their administration skills and enhance their foundational knowledge in government. Host agencies should ensure trainees are working toward achieving the learning outcomes.

To complete the program, trainees need to be able to:

- uphold the values and principles of public service
- work effectively in the organisation
- contribute to workgroup activities
- work effectively with diversity
- use workplace communication strategies
- comply with legislation in the public sector
- contribute to workplace safety
- address client needs
- compose workplace documents
- build and maintain internal networks
- provide first aid.

Working with the RTO

The RTO will schedule a meeting with the agency and trainee at the beginning of the program in order to ensure all parties understand the requirements of the qualification. It is important that the supervisor attends as this will assist in the allocation of work tasks to ensure alignment with learning outcomes.

On-the-job training

On-the-job training is the most important element of the program and is applied in the context of the host agencies job function and workplace. Relevant and meaningful workplace tasks deliver a form of training that provides learning opportunities while developing skills, experience and knowledge align to the competencies.

The host agency should establish a learning process that ensures trainees understand new tasks and are provided an opportunity to apply the skills.

A suitable learning process will:

- provide what the task is, why it needs to be completed and how it fits in with other tasks that are being completed in the agency
- demonstrate the steps to complete the task and ask the trainee to make note for future reference
- have the trainee practice the demonstrated steps to complete the task correctly under supervision
- allow the trainee to complete the task unsupervised when they feel comfortable
- provide positive feedback to the trainee and make suggestions for improvement.

Frequently asked questions

How many supervisors are required for a trainee?

In most cases, one individual from the agency is a dedicated supervisor. This is so the trainee has a consistent point of contact and to avoid miscommunications. However, if it is appropriate, the agency can delegate, more than one or a group to collectively look after a trainee.

What happens if the supervisor goes on leave?

It is important that if the direct supervisor is on a period of leave that there is another individual the trainee can contact for work activities or if they are running late/absent from the workplace. In addition, another individual will need to have appropriate authority to approve timesheet and leave application forms.

Should I be concerned what my trainee does outside of work hours?

Your duty of care is limited to the workplace but should there be non-work issues which are—or could potentially—impact work performance it is important that you raise these in a constructive manner and provide appropriate guidance. For further assistance, please contact the workplace mentor with any concerns.

How much time should I allow the trainee to work on their qualification?

The bulk of the qualification will require the trainee to gather evidence from on-the-job experience. On average, a few hours a week will be sufficient to complete knowledge questions. This will be dependent on how the trainee is tracking and it is recommended that the supervisors liaise with the RTO trainer as to what the trainee's individual needs are to complete the competencies.

What happens if my trainee is not on track for completion?

The RTO closely monitors the progress of the trainee and will implement structured strategies to ensure that the trainee completes competencies by the end of the program. Please contact the mentors with any concerns you may have to determine the best course of action.

Are there any circumstances when the training contract may be extended?

Extensions are only granted on a case-by-case basis. Should this occur, a proposal to extend this must be received by the Commission from the host agency and trainee, for endorsement by the Commission. Examples of when this may occur are when:

- the trainee requires further time to achieve on-the-job competencies
- issues are identified such as serious/terminal illness of a family member which has effected workplace attendance not allowing on-the-job experience to achieve competencies.

All parties (RTO, the Commission and the host agency) need to understand that an extension will mean extending the term of the training contract, therefore extending the obligations that fall under this. Should this occur and all parties agree, the trainee will continue to be paid at or above the minimum rate of a trainee as stipulated in their industrial agreement or award.

Please note that training contact extensions must be approved by the Apprenticeship Office and that employment contracts must align to this extension.

What is required if we want our trainee to travel to a regional office?

Prior to any trainee going on regional travel, a copy of the itinerary must be submitted to the Commission's mentors for their records as justification for attendance and to assess any potential risk and OSH issues. Following this assessment, the Commission will provide approval for the trainee to attend. All regional travel requires trainees to be accompanied by a senior staff member for the entire duration of the travel. Further, the Commission will liaise with the supervisor and trainee to clarify the guidelines relating to the incursion of expenses.

Who should I contact if I have issues with my trainee?

The first point of contact should be the allocated Commission mentor. The mentors are able to provide expertise on how to deal with the issue and will often conduct a workplace visit to speak to the trainee about the issue raised, providing support and guidance on resolving the matter.

What happens if we encounter a work issue that we cannot resolve?

Efforts should always be made to resolve any workplace issue that may occur. Mentors are available for consultation and should be contacted when issues are first identified to provide support and guidance to all parties involved. The mentors should be involved in any decision making and be informed along the way. Should a workplace issue be of a serious nature, the Commission will work closely with the agency to resolve the issue.

Withdrawal of hosting arrangements should only occur in exceptional circumstances. A minimum notice period of four weeks must be given to the Commission to allow organisation of a replacement host agency. This include providing evidence that a performance management process has been followed and that the withdrawal of the hosting arrangement is the only option.

Should the trainee wish to terminate their traineeship, they must contact their mentor and provide a letter of resignation.

Please note, a host agency cannot terminate the employment of a trainee as they are employees of the Commission.

What happens at the end of the traineeship?

The program is an intensive 12-month program and the Commission hosts a graduation ceremony to celebrate the achievements of each trainee. Special guest speakers, family members and a host agencies representative are all invited to attend where trainees will also receive their qualification.

Upon successful completion, agencies may recruit and employ trainees through the following mechanisms:

- a fixed-term employment
- an employment through another traineeship at a higher qualification (e.g. Certificate IV in Government)
- permanent appointment at Level 1 through the Commission's [Traineeship Transition to Employment, Recruitment and Referral Services](#) (TTERRS)

What happens if our agency cannot offer ongoing employment?

Employment at the end of the traineeship is not guaranteed. We recognise that circumstances can change over the period of the program and that some agencies may not be able to provide ongoing employment. In the instance that the agency cannot offer employment, the mentors will work closely with the trainee to identify opportunities at other agencies.

All trainees who successfully complete the program are offered the option to register to the TTERRS pool. Applications from trainees require endorsement from the host agency and their registration will remain valid for up to 12-months from completion. The pool will allow the Commission to refer individuals for Level 1 permanent appointments across the sector.

Definitions

Australian Apprenticeship Centre

Australian Apprenticeship Centre's (AAC) are contracted by the Commonwealth Government to provide information, administration services and support to employers, apprentices and trainees. AACs assist with the signing of training contracts and assess, approve and process the payment of Commonwealth Government incentives to eligible employers, apprentices and trainees.

The Apprenticeship Office provides support to employers, apprentices and trainees. Support services include advice on the rights and obligations of apprentices and trainees, available training options and general administration.

Aboriginal people

Through this guide, we respectfully refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals.

Candidate

A person who has applied for the Aboriginal Traineeship Program.

Certificate III in Government (Public Administration)

Nationally recognised qualification a trainee completes during their public sector traineeship.

Competencies

Competencies are the units of work which need to be completed, assessed and recognised in order to achieve the qualification.

Mentors

An Aboriginal staff member who is experienced within the program to provide professional support and guidance to the trainee and host agency.

Registered Training Organisation

Registered Training Organisation's (RTO) are responsible for delivering the traineeship qualifications and competencies

Supervisor

A person who supervises the trainee in the workplace and provides them with training, support and tasks to complete.

Trainee

A successful candidate who has been appointed to a fixed-term traineeship contract.

Traineeship

Employment based training where trainees are employed on a fixed-term contract for 12-months full-time to complete a government qualification and are paid a trainee wage.

Training contract

A legally binding agreement between the Commission and the trainee. It outlines the Commission's obligation to employ and train the trainee, provide the relevant wages and conditions and ensure that the trainee receives adequate facilities and supervision necessary to complete the training.

Training plan

A training plan must clearly state the following:

- the approved qualification that the trainee will be required to attend in order to achieve the competencies required for the prescribed qualification to which the contract relates
- the training and assessment—both off-the-job and on-the-job—that will be provided to the trainee
- when, where and how that training and assessment will be provided to the trainee
- who will provide that training and assessment to the trainee.

Further Information

Please contact the Diversity and Employment team at the Commission for any further queries on (08) 6552 8864 or aboriginalemployment@psc.wa.gov.au

Public Sector Commission

<http://www.publicsector.wa.gov.au>

Traineeship wages and conditions of employment

www.commerce.wa.gov.au

Copies of awards and agreements

www.wairc.wa.gov.au

Public sector training package

www.training.gov.au