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Introduction

The ‘Public sector school-based traineeship program’ is a Western Australian public sector initiative aimed at attracting and recruiting young public sector employees. The Public Sector Commission coordinates the program. The program offers a smooth transition from the school environment into the workforce, and provides an entry point for a career within the public sector.

By working within the public sector, you will gain valuable business and project support skills, earn money and gain a formal qualification, all while completing your Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE).

What is a traineeship?

Traineeships combine practical experience at work with structured training. Traineeships are usually in non-trade areas such as hospitality, business, manufacturing and health.

As a trainee, you enter into a formal training contract with an employer that leads to a nationally recognised qualification. You spend time in paid employment, learning practical skills on the job and putting them into practice.

Certificate II in Government is focused on administration and has a broad range of practical skills and knowledge that enable you to work in an office environment. The skills include customer service, administration, recordkeeping, designing and writing business documents and implementing business processes.

The training requirements are part of your training plan which is negotiated between your employer, you and your registered training organisation (RTO). Traineeships are now competency based, this means that you do not have exams for this course but your work is used as the evidence for this certificate.

Trainees will complete a Certificate II in Government and receive a nationally recognised qualification on completion of the traineeship.

How does the program work?

The program is a structured program, combining training and paid employment. As a school-based trainee, the students work two days a week and attend school for the remaining three days, while completing years 11 and 12. It is the trainee’s responsibility to ensure that all assessment tasks are completed and submitted on or before the due date. Individual schools determine the work-release days for students (consecutive days are preferred).

The school has agreed to release the student into the workplace for two days per week on the understanding that they will maintain their school work. If they miss classes due to their traineeship commitments, it is their responsibility to ensure that all assessment tasks are completed and submitted on or before the due date.

Trainees are still regarded as a student and must adhere to the policies and procedures of both the school and the Department of Education. The traineeship will contribute to the WACE.
Conditions of employment

If the student accepts the traineeship offer, they will be required to sign a fixed-term contract for 18 months.

Trainees will be required to work 7.5 hours each day. Start and finishing times vary from agency to agency. Trainees will be required to keep and maintain a detailed time sheet showing their hours and attendance.

School-based trainees will be assigned a designated supervisor within the workplace. The RTO provides workplace coordination, monitoring and support services every four to six weeks.

School-based trainees will be paid an hourly rate of $9.71 in Year 11, and $10.70 per hourly rate in Year 12 (these rates are subject to change) and have a common anniversary date of 1 January each year, where an increase to the year 12 wage level will occur. This is in accordance with the Department of Commerce’s Circular to departments and authorities.

Induction days and off-the-job training days are also held throughout the year for school-based trainees, these days are compulsory to attend.

Application criteria

To apply for the program, students must be:

• an Australian citizen, permanent resident or holder of a current working visa
• currently enrolled in year 10 at a WA public school and commencing year 11
• deemed academically capable of undertaking a school-based traineeship by their school’s VET Coordinator
• enthusiastic, reliable and dedicated to completing their schooling as well as meeting the program requirements.
• education support students and Aboriginal students are strongly encouraged to apply.
Registering your interest and submitting the application

Your application is to be submitted through the JobsWA website www.jobs.wa.gov.au

Government qualifications are designed to develop skills and knowledge essential for a trainee embarking on a career in the public sector. These competencies develop skills in the business of government through a range of entry level public administrative tasks.

If referred to an agency for an interview, the student should research that agency and the services it provides. Students can find links to agency websites at www.wa.gov.au/agencies

Public sector agencies will assess the quality of the student’s résumé to determine whether the student will be suitable. Therefore, it is essential that the student’s résumé looks professional and clearly articulates their abilities. This is also a great opportunity for students to demonstrate their computer skills to potential employers.

Before submitting the application, complete the application checklist on the application form to ensure the student has included everything in their application.

Applications must be submitted online or via your VET coordinator, and include:

- a completed recommendation form
- a current résumé, including:
  - school subjects being undertaken
  - work experience, part-time work and volunteer work undertaken (including duties completed)
  - courses or qualifications completed (e.g. First Aid, WorkSafe certificate)
  - an outline of skills (e.g. word processing, customer service, software and technology).
  - contact details of at least one referee from the school and one other referee
- student’s year 10 semester 1 report.

1. The selection process

Short listed student’s resumes are forwarded to various agencies for their consideration and further assessment from October. Agencies may invite students to attend an interview and will then select the most suitable candidate(s) to undertake the program within their agency. This is rated on suitability and how well the applicant engaged with the people conducting the interviews.

It is important to note that, even though a student may be considered suitable for a school-based traineeship during their preliminary interview, there is no guarantee that they will be
offered a school-based traineeship position within a public sector agency. Schools are advised to organise a contingency plan for students who do not successfully gain a school-based traineeship.

The resume needs to address the selection criteria to identify the student can successfully carry out the job and match the right person to the position.

A referral for an interview is generated and conducted by the agency to evaluate the students that are suitable for the program.

The agency will decide which candidate is the most suitable to fill the position.

2. Information evening

Successful students and their parents are invited to attend an information evening, which provides detailed information on the program.

3. Offer of a position

The agency will conduct an interview and may offer the student an opportunity to undertake a school-based traineeship. The Commission will confirm placements with participating agencies and arrange the training contract signing event.

- Successful trainees will be invited to attend a formal sign up meeting with their parents where they will sign a training contract with an Australian Apprenticeship Centre
- The trainee will be placed on a fixed-term contract of employment with the agency.

The majority of school-based trainees will be covered by the Public Service Award 1992 or by the Government Officers’ Salaries Allowances Conditions Award 1989.

If the school-based trainee is covered by either of the above awards, they will be appointed under:

- section 17 of the Public Service Award 1992, section 64(1)(b) of the Public Sector Management Act 1994 and under the terms and conditions of the Public Service and Government Officers General Agreement 2011
- section 17 and section 8 of the Government Officers’ Salaries Allowances Conditions Award 1989 and under the terms and conditions of the Public Service and Government Officers General Agreement 2011.

If the school-based trainee is not covered by either of the above awards, they should be appointed according to the terms and conditions of employment in the award, act or agreement applicable to the agency.

The Department of Commerce issued a circular to departments and authorities which outlines the wage schedule for all trainees.
School-based trainees have a common anniversary date of 1 January each year, where they receive an increase to the Year 12 wage level.

The selection and appointment of trainees from the program is made in line with:

- Commissioner’s Instruction No. 1 – Employment Standard
- Commissioner’s Instruction No. 2 – Filling a Public Sector Vacancy
- Public Sector Management (Breaches of Public Sector Standards) Regulations 2005

**Sign up process**

You will sign a training contract with the Australian Apprenticeship Centre. Students will also sign the training plan with the RTO showing the modules that need to be completed to receive a Certificate II in Government.

The RTO representative will visit your workplace, and in consultation with the supervisor, will select the units the student will undertake for the certificate. The RTO representative will prepare a formal training plan and forward a copy to the relevant parties including the school VET Coordinator.

**Entering the workplace**

You should wear smart, conservative clothing that is appropriate for an office environment. Observe the attire of your co-workers.

Do not wear clothing that is revealing, too short or too casual. Some agencies have free-dress days, ask your supervisor for advice on what is appropriate casual dress for you to wear.

Apply yourself to your training and make the effort to learn the skills you need to gain a qualification, and complete the training both on and off the job.

Understand that you are making a commitment to your workplace and that you are responsible for your workmates and work property.

Nervousness prior to commencing a new job is normal. The more time you spend preparing, the more confident you will be. Your supervisor and RTO representative are there to assist you.
Graduation

Upon successful completion of all program requirements, a graduation ceremony is held for Year 12 students, usually in September each year. Qualifications are presented to trainees who have been assessed as completing all aspects of the program. Trainees who have not completed all requirements will be presented with a Certificate of Participation.

Career options on completion of the program

Upon the successful completion of the program, a school-based trainee can:

- accept an offer of employment from their agency
- complete a higher level traineeship
- accept fixed-term or permanent Level 1 position
- register for the traineeship transition to employment program
- apply for employment opportunities via jobs.wa.gov.au
- seek other employment or education opportunities.

Termination

In the event that a student wishes to terminate their school-based traineeship, the matter will be reviewed by, the agency supervisor and the school VET coordinator. The Commission may also provide assistance where required. The trainee must submit a formal, written letter of resignation to resign from the traineeship contract.

If termination of the traineeship agreement is initiated by the employer, appropriate action will be pursued in line with the relevant industrial award or agreements.

Where a school-based traineeship is terminated, the student will automatically be de-registered from the program. The employer will notify the ApprentiCentre and the Commission within 14 days of the traineeship termination.
Tips to success

The interview process is competitive, with students competing against at least five other candidates for each traineeship opportunity, so it is essential that they are well prepared for each interview.

Apart from ensuring high standards of personal presentation and grooming on the day, there are a number of other things students can do to prepare for the interviews.

Before the registration process, the student should research the WA public sector and some of the services it provides. A good place to start is at www.wa.gov.au

Students should consider the questions that may be asked during the interview and prepare answers for each. Questions students may be asked include:

- Why do you want to undertake a school-based traineeship?
- What do you know about the program?
- Give examples of Microsoft Office software you can use.
- Give an example of when you have worked independently.
- Describe any work experience you have completed.
- Give an example of when you have worked in a team.
- What do you consider to be good customer service?
- How would you deal with a difficult customer?

Students should think of one or two questions they would like to ask the interviewer.

Students should take a neatly presented portfolio to the interview, including:

- their current résumé
- school reports
- any current certificates of achievement or commendations
- any qualifications (e.g. Certificates completed, First Aid courses)
- a written reference
- samples of work completed.
Frequently asked questions

How many hours are the trainees required to attend?

Trainees are required to complete their traineeship over a period of 18 months. They will attend the workplace for 7.5 hours each day, two days per week. Starting and finishing times can be flexible, however, the employing agency may have definite starting and finishing times.

Do the trainees work during the school holidays?

Yes, trainees must continue to attend their designated days throughout the holiday periods. They will be required to apply for leave if they wish to take the time off.

Employers may offer trainees extra work during holiday periods or negotiate for the trainee to work in block periods to free up the December and January school holiday period.

What happens if I am unable to attend the workplace due to illness?

You must make three phone calls:

1. Phone your workplace supervisor
2. Phone the school
3. Phone your RTO representative

You need to contact these three people before 9.00am.

How much supervision is provided to the trainee?

Trainees have a high level of supervision, with the agency, school and the RTO all providing assistance.

While trainees are part-time employees, they are still classified as full-time school students by the Department of Education. Trainees respond best to a structured program hence a proactive supervisor will be allocated, who will be able to monitor the workflow, training requirements and be there if they have an issue. The trainee should feel comfortable that there is help available if they do not understand something.

What happens if I am not offered a traineeship?

If you are not offered a traineeship you will be notified as early as possible. The agency’s decision is final. Your school and parent or guardian will be notified.

We encourage all students to have an alternative schooling plan in place with their VET Coordinator in case they are not offered a traineeship.
**Will I have to work during the school holidays?**

Yes, you must continue to attend your designated days throughout the holiday periods. Once you have signed a fixed term contract, you will be required to apply for leave if you wish to take time off during the school holidays.

**How much annual leave am I entitled to receive?**

As a part-time, fixed-term employee, you are entitled to pro-rata leave entitlements.

You are entitled to approximately four days sick leave and six days annual leave per year. You will need to apply for annual leave in advance. Leave that is not used in a calendar year, will carry over into the next year. You do not lose your sick leave or annual leave if you do not use it.

**If I need to attend a school excursion on my designated work day, what should I do?**

You should speak to your supervisor and ask if you can change your designated day to accommodate the excursion. Alternatively, your supervisor may allow you to make up the extra day in the holidays. If you do not attend the workplace, it will be counted as leave.

**Do I need a doctor’s certificate if I am away due to illness?**

Where possible, it is recommended that you obtain a doctor’s certificate to explain an absence due to illness.

**My family has booked a holiday and I will need to take some time off from work. What should I do?**

You should always apply for leave in advance. As soon as you know the holiday dates, you should inform your supervisor or human resources department. You may be able to accumulate days by working extra days in the school holidays.
I have school exams and would like to take some time off to study. What should I do?

Inform your supervisor as soon as you know the dates of your exams. It may be possible for you to change your work days for the exam period.

I would like to work during the school holidays. Will I get paid for the extra days I work?

You will only be paid if your workplace approaches you to work extra days and this is formally acknowledged and recorded by the human resources department. If you want to accumulate days to use later, your workplace is not obliged to pay you.

What happens if I wish to terminate my contract?

In the event that you wish to terminate your traineeship, the matter will be reviewed by your agency and your VET Coordinator.

If your traineeship is terminated, you will automatically be de-registered from the program. If you wish to resign from your traineeship, you must submit a formal, written letter of resignation. Once your agency has received your letter of resignation, your contract will be terminated. Your representative is required to notify the ApprentiCentre within 14 days of your formal resignation. As noted above, always speak to your RTO representative before making any decisions.

I enjoy attending the workplace but I am unhappy at school. Can I change to a full time position?

You can only complete your traineeship if you are attending school. If you wish to leave school you will need to resign from your traineeship.