NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT
TRaineeship and IndigEnous
TRaineeship Programs

Guidelines for Traineeships in the NTPS

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1 RATIONALE

The Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) recognises the need for innovative workforce planning and development to ensure it has the capability and capacity to deliver the highest quality of service to all Territorians.

One of the greatest challenges facing the NTPS is to attract and retain skilled and experienced workers to counter the impact of an ageing workforce, demographic change, current and projected service demands and the economic environment.

The Northern Territory Government (NTG) aims to establish and support a sustainable, innovative and responsive workforce to meet current and future demands from the community. To achieve this, agencies integrate the strategic and operational workforce planning into their normal business planning cycle.

The NTG Traineeship and Indigenous Traineeship Programs are workforce development initiatives that address the supply gaps from the workforce planning activities. They are a best practice recruitment and development strategy designed to grow new generations of employees whose skills, knowledge and experience will help shape the social and economic future of the Territory.¹

Apprenticeships and traineeships offer a great way to get a head start in a chosen career with paid work and structured training, which leads to a nationally recognised qualification. The knowledge and skills obtained during an apprenticeship or traineeship provide a pathway from school to work, the basis for further education and training, or opportunities for existing workers to gain a qualification.

As a result of changing workforce needs in the NTG, qualifications offered through the programs are primarily in vocational areas that fall under the definition of a “Traineeship”. Therefore the programs, previously known as the NTPS Apprenticeship and Indigenous Apprenticeship Programs, are now known as the NTG Traineeship and Indigenous Traineeship Programs “the traineeship programs”. This does not however, preclude agencies from employing skilled trade Apprentices through the programs.

2 DEFINITIONS

**Australian Apprentice**: The national term used to describe both apprentices and trainees collectively. Participation in an Australian Apprenticeship is open to anyone aged 15 and over. The Northern Territory Department of Business, Employment and Training NT can assess applications that vary from this on a case-by-case basis.²

**Apprenticeship / Traineeship**: A legally binding training arrangement, through a formal contract of training (a training agreement), between an employer and an apprentice or trainee (and a parent or guardian if under 18 years) that combines structured training with paid employment.

Apprenticeships are at Certificate III level and above in the traditional trade occupations such as builders, construction workers, plumbers, mechanics and electricians, as well as other occupations such as chefs, butchers and hairdressers. Apprenticeships will have a formal study component, accompanied with on the job competency based training. An apprenticeship may take three to four years to complete.

Traineeships are at Certificate II level and above and are more common in industries such as retail, hospitality, business services, information technology and community services.

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Traineeships may take one to two years to complete, or more for higher level and management qualifications. Competency based training principles must be applied.

**School Based Apprentice or Trainee:** A student enrolled in a registered school at stage 1 or 2 (year 11 or 12) and aged 15 years or older, undertaking a part-time apprenticeship/traineeship with an employer and with the agreement of the school.

**Group Training Organisations – (GTO):** a corporation established predominately to provide training and employment opportunities.

**Field Officer:** an officer employed by a GTO; responsible for mentoring and liaising with Trainees and Apprentices, DCIS EPU, employer agencies, and other relevant stakeholders as required.

**Training Contract:** A legally binding agreement between the employer (Northern Territory of Australia) and an apprentice or trainee. It allows for the Australian Apprentice to undertake structured training that leads to a nationally recognised qualification. It specifies the rights and obligations of both parties. If the Australian Apprentice is under 18 years of age, a parent or legal guardian must sign the Training Contract.

**Registered Training Organisation (RTO):** Providers of training who have satisfied the national criteria for provision of training services and who have been registered by a State/Territory Authority.

**Training Plan:** A Training Plan is completed by the RTO in consultation with the Supervisor and Australian Apprentice. It outlines the skills or competencies that the Australian Apprentice should achieve during the Australian Apprenticeship.

**Work Plan:** The Work Plan is created by the Supervisor to identify tasks in the workplace which is aimed towards achieving competencies outlined in the Training Plan.

**Employment Contract:** An employment contract is a legal document in which the employee is offered, and accepts, employment in the NTPS for a specified time only. The contract details the designation (level), employment dates (start date / end date) and salary. There may be other unique information relevant to the employment.

**Third Party Report:** Some RTOs may require a supervisor to complete one of these reports which assesses the trainee’s performance in the workplace. This report is an essential part of the evidence collected to ensure they have achieved the required outcomes.

**Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO):** The underlying principles of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) in the NTPS include:

- the application of the merit principle as defined in Part 1A Section 5D of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act* (PSEMA) to all aspects of selection for promotion or appointment;
- the identification and elimination of all forms of discrimination and harassment in recruitment selection, professional development, personnel practices, job evaluation and conditions of service;
- action necessary to remedy the effects of past discrimination;
- the promotion of fair and equitable treatment for all employees in all operational policies and procedures; and
- reflecting the diverse nature of the Territory community and its needs in the composition of the workforce.
3 PURPOSE

The purpose of these guidelines is to:

- establish best practice workforce planning and development as the driver of recruitment decisions in the NTPS;
- develop the capability and increase the capacity of the NTPS to resolve current and future skill shortages;
- address the under representation of EEO groups in the NTPS (Indigenous people, people with disabilities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and women in management and non-traditional employment);
- recruit, develop and retain trainees in the NTPS; and
- create equity of access to employment for trainees in the regions.

4 PROCEDURES

4.1 Participating Agencies

All agencies are strongly encouraged to participate in the traineeship programs either as a host employer or by sharing a trainee with another agency or agencies.

The success of the traineeship placement in terms of establishing ongoing employment in the NTPS, may be assisted through workforce planning activities. This can be achieved by agencies aligning the traineeship opportunities offered with identified skill gaps.

All agencies represented in the regions are strongly encouraged to offer places on the traineeship programs or an alternative early careers program (e.g. a Cadetship, or Graduate Development Program) either on a rotation basis or as a shared resource.

4.2 Employer Incentives

Agencies employing a trainee, may be eligible for Northern Territory Government (NTG) funding in addition to financial assistance and incentives provided by the Australian Government. As the eligibility criteria for incentives changes from year to year it is recommended that advice be sought from the Department of Corporate and Information Services, Employment Programs Unit (DCIS EPU) and / or the Australian Apprenticeships Centre (AAC).

The DCIS EPU incentives scheme aims to boost the uptake of trainees within the Northern Territory Public Sector by supporting agencies financially. The incentive initiative is focussed on participant development and removing barriers for agencies to actively support programs as part of their workforce development. DCIS EPU provides incentives to encourage training that:

- Supports developing industries or industries in which there are skill shortages;
- Increases training opportunities in regional and remote locations;
- Supports employment of school based trainees; and
- Offers disadvantaged groups pathways to training and employment.

For more information on the current available NTG employer incentives, please contact DCIS EPU.
For more information on the current Australian Government employer incentives, and eligibility please visit www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/info_emps/incentives.asp

DCIS EPU will be responsible for claiming Australian Government incentives and remit all payments (including NTG funding) to agencies.

### 4.3 Recruitment Process

The Employment Programs Unit within DCIS administers the traineeship programs and coordinates the trainee recruitment process across the Northern Territory on behalf of the NTPS.

An annual intake for the traineeship programs, including school based traineeships, occurs in February (advertising and recruitment commences in approximately August). Agencies need to plan for their traineeship intakes so that sufficient budget allocations are made and relevant resources organised.

Where agencies determine a business need to recruit trainees outside of the annual intake, please contact DCIS EPU for the options available and more information.

Agencies are responsible for developing their own appropriate selection process for trainees; DCIS EPU will conduct initial screening of all applicants to assist with this process. Agencies will inform DCIS EPU of the disciplines in which they want to engage trainee and negotiate with DCIS EPU regarding the level of training (Certificate II through to Diploma) that will be required. Agencies will consult with DCIS EPU where they wish to select outside of the available pool of applicants.

### 4.4 Diversity Strategies

Having a workforce that is representative of the community it serves is an important goal for the NTPS. Through the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE), the NTPS has strategies in place for recruiting and supporting traineeships from EEO and other diversity groups. These include the EmployAbility Strategy and the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy. Agencies may also have their own supporting strategies and initiatives.

### 4.5 The NTG Indigenous Traineeship Program

DCIS EPU have approval from OCPE under special measures to administer the NTG Indigenous Traineeship Program. This program allows agencies to identify indigenous specific traineeship positions within their agency; and to consider only indigenous applicants for those positions. Advertised and recruited to as part of the NTG Traineeship Program, applicants who identify as indigenous are eligible for the Indigenous Traineeship Program.

### 4.6 Duration of Traineeships

The duration of the traineeships will vary from 12 months to 4 years as determined by:

- the qualification level (Certificate II through to Diploma);
- the nominal hours attributed to the course in the relevant training package; and
- successful completion of all the competencies required under the traineeship as outlined by the Training Plan between the employer, the trainee and the Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

### 4.7 Employment Conditions

Trainees and school based trainees will be employed by an agency on a temporary employment contract of 1 - 4 years, as determined by the qualification level. The conditions of employment are specified in Determination 7 of 2012.

The trainees and school based trainees will also be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Training Contract.
4.8 Remuneration

The salary for a new employee undertaking a traineeship or a school based traineeship will be based on the National Training Wage as described in OCPE Determination 4 of 2015 and successive determinations.

Should a trainee’s course not be listed in the Schedule 2 of Determination 4 of 2015, trainees will be paid on the salary described for “trainees” in a relevant (private) industry award. The relevance of an award will be decided by the agency in consultation with the OCPE. Where special circumstances exist (e.g. for some adult trainees) application by the relevant agency could be made to the Commissioner for Public Employment to pay above these rates.

The Chief Executive, or delegate, may approve annual salary progression for the Australian Apprentice subject to satisfying relevant performance criteria as defined by the Training Contract. This is in accordance with Determination 7 of 2012.3

Living away from home allowance may be available when the employee has had to move away from home to take up or remain in a traineeship or, is homeless (proof required).4 This is accessible through the Australian Apprenticeships Centre.

4.9 Rotations

It is highly desirable for trainees to be rotated every 3-6 months to provide them with the opportunity to develop a broad range of skills and knowledge relevant to their discipline, agency and the NTPS. These can be intra or inter agency rotations. Smaller agencies and regional offices are encouraged to share the rotations of trainees.

Any required rotations are to be discussed in advance with the trainee. DCISEPU must be notified of the rotation detailing the new supervisor and workplace, they will then notify the Australian Apprenticeships Centre and nominated Group Training Organisation.

4.10 Training Plan

A Training Plan is completed by the RTO in consultation with the supervisor and trainee. It outlines the skills or competencies that the trainee should achieve during the traineeship. A Training Plan must be completed regardless of whether the training will take place on or off the job or a combination of both.

4.11 Work Plan

Prior to the commencement of a trainee a supervisor will prepare a Work Plan which identifies those development opportunities that will be available in their work unit including any obligations in relation to the Training Contract (between the employer and the trainee) and course work. Progress towards this Work Plan will form the basis of the performance discussion at the end of each rotation. The nominated Early Career Coordinator will ensure that this discussion occurs for each rotation. DCISEPU will also assist with model plans and advice.

4.12 Mentoring

It is highly recommended that a mentor be made available to all trainees. It is not a requirement for the mentor to be from the host agency. The agency’s Early Careers Coordinator and the trainee will identify a mentor whom they are comfortable with. A previous trainee may be an appropriate person to act as a mentor for a recently appointed trainee.

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4.13 Early Careers Coordinator

All agencies will nominate an Early Careers Representative who will be responsible for coordinating the trainee placements, providing HR support and arranging the completion of an exit interview for the trainee after each rotation. The exit interview form is available from DCIS EPU and a copy must be provided to them upon completion.

4.14 Supervisors

Every trainee will have a supervisor for each rotation. All supervisors are responsible for ensuring the trainee is making progress against their Training Plan. All new supervisors should attend a Supervisor Induction Session prior to the commencement of a trainee.

4.15 Training for Mentors, Supervisors and Early Careers Coordinators

It is highly recommended that all mentors undertake appropriate training or coaching funded by the agency. Advice about the skills required and attributes of an effective mentor can be discussed with DCIS EPU.

Training will also be provided by DCIS EPU for supervisors and Early Careers Coordinators to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities to ensure the success of the placement.

4.16 Traineeship Disciplines

A trainee can be appointed in virtually any discipline. Training Packages are developed by industry through the National Industry Skills Councils (ISC), recognised bodies, or by enterprises to meet the identified training needs of specific industries or industry sectors. There are many different apprenticeships and traineeships available in over 200 disciplines; some for example include Business, Finance, Horticulture, Laboratory Skills, Conservation and Land Management, and even Food Services from the Health training package. Qualifications can range in level from a Certificate II through to a Diploma. For a full list of available disciplines see the NT Apprenticeship and Traineeships Database.

Agencies will be supported by DCIS EPU and the Australian Apprenticeships Centre in the identification of an appropriate training package and traineeship which is suitable for their discipline or area of expertise. DCIS EPU and the Australian Apprenticeships Centre will then seek to source this training in an appropriate mode of delivery.

The mode of delivery for a trainee will vary depending on the availability of the training and the location of the trainee. Examples are on the job, off the job, or a combination of both. “On” the job training is provided by the host agency and “off” the job training is delivered by a RTO. This may be in the form of block training, where the trainee is released from the workplace to attend classroom style, learning at regular weekly intervals throughout the duration of their traineeship, or online delivery.

Agencies can work collaboratively with DCIS EPU to determine which RTO:

- is registered and funded to deliver against a specific Training Package; and
- has the capacity to deliver in a mode that is appropriate for the trainee and their geographical location.

Those trainees who have prior knowledge, skills and experience relevant to any units of competence from the qualifications they undertake, will be able to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) with a nominated RTO.

4.17 School Based Traineeships

The NTPS, through the Department of Education is committed to providing pathways for Territory students to successfully transition from school to work through school based traineeships.
School based traineeships are a formal, structured employment and training arrangement endorsed by the school and subject to a registered training contract, training plan and a relevant industrial instrument.

They are characterised by a structured pattern of part time work engagement, school and training, where the training is part of and contributes to a student's secondary education. The aim of the school based traineeships is to:

- increase nationally recognised qualification attainment that translates to Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) outcomes;
- improve the retention of students at the senior school level; and
- increase completion of senior secondary schooling.

It is also aimed to provide students with an increased ability to perform in the workplace, leading to increased career choices and opportunities to transition from school to full time traineeships, employment or further education and training.

4.18 Program Training and Development

The Traineeship Programs have two additional components: “Working in the Public Service” and “Agency Specific Development”.

The "Working in the Public Service" component is designed to ensure that the trainee develops an understanding of the function and legislative framework of government and their responsibilities as a public sector employee.

The "Agency Specific Development" component is designed to provide trainees with an understanding of the purpose and function of the agency within which they are placed. These components are in addition to the development of discipline-specific skills and knowledge, and are at cost to the agency.

4.18.1 Working in the Public Service

The Working in the Public Service component will consist of:

- Traineeship Program Induction
- Trainee forums and workshops

These sessions will offer trainees, engaged in the NTPS, the learning and resources to demonstrate on the job skills which are recognized NTPS Government requirements. These include:

- the ability to apply ethical practices into the workplace to achieve the agencies expectations and deal with problems appropriately;
- the ability to recognize and value individual differences by working effectively with diversity; and
- the ability to follow legislative requirements and guidelines at all times.

4.18.2 Agency Specific Development

The Agency Specific Development component consists of:

- agency and work unit induction;
- remote location induction (if relevant); and
- relevant discipline-specific on the job training.
4.19 Program Management

4.19.1 Agency Responsibilities

The trainee is an agency employee. It is the Agency’s responsibility to:

- provide all operational costs including salary associated with the trainee as per OCPE Determinations;
- meet RTO amenity and / or subject fees charged;
- meet legal obligations regarding the trainee, including WHS, wages and conditions of employment as outlined under relevant departmental legislation;
- employ workforce planning strategies to identify opportunities for engaging discipline specific trainees in cooperation with DCIS EPU;
- in conjunction with DCIS EPU, carry out selection of an appropriate RTO to deliver and accredit the traineeship;
- negotiate with the RTO, units of competency to be delivered under the Training Plan, that are relevant to the workplace and trainee;
- provide an induction into the workplace;
- negotiate a work plan with the trainee to enable them to acquire the necessary skills;
- provide opportunities to use skills acquired in the workplace;
- provide work that is relevant and appropriate to the vocation and also achievement of the agreed qualification;
- provide, experienced/qualified people to ensure continual supervision of the trainee while at work;
- provide a mentor for the trainee;
- monitor and assess the trainee’s progress in the workplace;
- the agency supervisor is responsible for all aspects of performance management in line with the agency’s normal processes, including recognising and supporting good performance and managing areas for improvement;
- nominate a preferred GTO provider from the panel contract;
- engage with the field officer as the first point of contact in relation to trainee progress matters;
- provide regular feedback to DCIS EPU on field officers and matters of concern;
- liaise with DCIS EPU concerning the day to day management of the program;
- arrange regular rotations and advise DCIS EPU;
- ensure supervisors complete a third party report when required. This report is an essential part of the evidence and must be returned to RTO when completed. On some occasions, an RTO may create an Evidence Guide for each unit to assist supervisors with the signing off of third party reports;
- provide exit interviews, a copy of which are supplied to DCIS EPU;
- report on the Traineeship Programs to DCIS EPU and OCPE regarding numbers and progress; and
- meet all requirements of the OCPE Traineeship Guidelines.
4.19.2 Trainee Responsibilities

The trainee is responsible for:

- being involved in the process of creating a Training Plan with the supervisor and RTO;
- contributing to agency objectives and adhere to agency policies and procedures;
- communicating with the supervisor about progress against the Training Plan;
- taking a proactive approach in their development;
- attending and contributing to scheduled meetings and forums;
- fulfilling the obligations of their Employment and Training Contracts; and
- observing the NTPS Code of Conduct.

4.19.3 OCPE Responsibilities

OCPE is responsible for:

- establishing and maintaining the guidelines for the NTG Traineeship Program, in partnership with agencies and DCIS EPU;
- setting employment conditions; and
- evaluating the effectiveness of the guidelines in consultation with agencies.

4.19.4 DCIS EPU Responsibilities

DCIS EPU is responsible for:

- promotion and advertising for Trainees;
- providing recruitment administration function for agencies;
- induction of trainees into the NTPS;
- induction of supervisors for commencing trainees;
- organising Training Contracts between the NT Government, the trainee and the Australian Apprenticeships Centre;
- maintaining individual trainee personnel files and records;
- contract management of the mentoring and support services provided to trainees by GTOs;
- quality assurance and distribution of GTO monthly summary reports to agency ECCs;
- coordinating the "Working in the Public Service" component of the traineeship programs;
- providing training opportunities for supervisors/mentors;
- providing agencies with further information on RTO’s responsibilities;
- assisting with development of Training Plans and providing advice on alternative placements;
- managing and remitting all payments under the DCIS EPU Employer Incentives Scheme to agencies;
- claiming Australian Government incentives and remitting all payments (to agencies
- providing advice to agencies of appropriate development opportunities for trainees;
- working in partnership with OCPE and agencies regarding policy development;
• liaising with the Australian Apprenticeships Centre for sign off at completion of the traineeship;
• coordination of graduation for all successful trainees;
• sector wide reporting on all NT Government employed apprentices and trainees; and
• provide overarching support, mediation, advice and guidance in relation to all aspects of the Traineeship programs,

4.19.5 Group Training Organisation Responsibilities
Group training organisations are engaged through a contract managed by DCIS EPU. GTO responsibilities include:
• nominating a field officer for each trainee, to provide mentoring and support; and monitor the on the job and off the job progress of the trainee
• being the main point of contact for the workplace, RTO and school (where applicable) in relation to trainee progress and matters of concern
• at a minimum, conduct contact meetings every four weeks with supervisors and trainees, with additional visits if extra support is required
• liaise with RTOs, on a four weekly basis at a minimum, to obtain reports or feedback on each trainee’s progress against their training plan; confirm attendance at classes and completion of assessment tasks
• mediate any retention, performance or training issues with trainees as required and in consultation with agency ECC’s and DCIS EPU
• provide monthly summary reports to DCIS EPU on individual trainee progress

4.20 Completion
Although there is no guarantee of ongoing employment upon successful completion of a traineeship, agencies are encouraged to offer further employment where possible. Having a career plan in place for trainees may assist with agencies being in a position to offer ongoing employment or to assist with the transition into the private sector or another Agency.

On successful completion of the traineeship programs, a Chief Executive may appoint the trainee permanently using PSEMA Public Sector Instrument No 11.

All other trainees who have successfully completed their traineeship are encouraged to apply for the “Entry Level Program” through DCIS Recruitment Services, during the last two months of their traineeship and the first month after the completion of their traineeship.

5 RECORDS AND REPORTING
All agencies will maintain their own records and data relating to engagement and progress of trainees. Information to be reported to DCIS EPU is as follows:
• trainee rotations;
• changes in trainee supervisor details
• trainee resignations;
• trainee suspensions;
changes to standard work days for school based trainees including short-term increases or reductions.

- promotions inside or outside the sector;
- destination if promoted outside the service (if available); and
- a summary of feedback gained through exit interviews which would serve to improve the traineeship programs.

DCIS EPU is responsible for sector wide reporting on all NT Government employed apprentices and trainees. DCIS EPU may seek statistical data from agencies on apprentices and trainees employed directly, or through other group training arrangements, from time to time.

6 REVIEW

A full evaluation of the traineeship programs will take place every two years. A mid-term evaluation will take place every 12 months to ensure that the program is implemented in the way it was intended.
7  FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on the NTG Traineeship and Indigenous Traineeship Programs, please visit the DCIS website: www.employmentprograms.nt.gov.au or contact the Strategic Workforce Planning and Development Unit within the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment at swpd.ocpe@nt.gov.au

For further information on Australian Apprenticeship eligibility and funding, please visit the Australian Apprenticeships website: http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/info_emps/incentives.asp

For further information on Apprenticeships and Traineeships, please visit the DoB website: http://www.dob.nt.gov.au/training/apprenticeships-traineeships

For further information on Registered Training Organisations, Industry Skills Councils and Training Packages, please visit the Training.gov.au website: http://www.training.gov.au. Also visit the Australian Apprenticeships Centre at 6 Searcy Street, Darwin, phone 1300 137 130, or go to: www.aacnt.com.au

For further information on Workforce Planning, please visit the OCPE website: www.ocpe.nt.gov.au/workforce_planning

For further information on the NTPS EmployAbility Strategy, please visit the OCPE website: http://www.ocpe.nt.gov.au/building_capability/equity_and_diversity/disability_in_the_workplace/willing_and_able_strategy

For further information on the NTPS Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy, please visit the OCPE website: http://www.ocpe.nt.gov.au/building_capability/indigenous_employment

For further information about the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) ‘National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions’ and ‘National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap)’, go to: www.coag.gov.au