

Skills First apprentices and trainees

This fact sheet explains the key Skills First requirements for apprentices and trainees and where to go for more information.

Before structured training

Eligibility	In addition to our eligibility requirements, Skills First apprentices must also: • be employed in Victoria • be doing an approved training scheme • have a training contract registered with the VRQA
Concessions	You must ensure that apprentices eligible for a concession are charged a concession rate on their tuition fees. Even if the employer pays the fees. Apprentices earn low wages so it's a good idea to remind them they might be eligible for a health care card. If they have a concession card at the time of enrolment, this applies to the whole program. If they experience a delay getting their card, you can allow a grace period until they can show it to you. See our Concessions fact sheet.
Pre-training review	You must do a pre-training review, even if the apprentice has a training contract and has picked you as their training provider. You must include how you've considered their literacy and numeracy (LN) skills. For example, if they've done an LN test already, you need to decide if it gives you enough information that the training is at the right level for them. If they need support, document this and communicate it to teachers. See our fact sheet How to consider literacy and numeracy skills.
Training plan	Make sure there's a good fit between the apprentice or trainee and employer, and that everyone is aware of their obligations. The VET funding contract sets out what needs to be in the training plan. You must work with the employer and apprentice or trainee to develop the plan, keep it up to date and set expectations early so everyone understands their role. For school-based apprentices/trainees (SBATs) including Head Start apprentices/trainees (HSATs), this includes an authorised school representative. It's important that everyone understands: • How competency-based progression works. • What skills need structured training off-the-job • The purpose and frequency of your contacts and visits. You need to have a suitable schedule of training, and plan to complete the training by the nominal end date of the training contract. If things change, that's fine but act early. The employer needs to lodge a request to extend the training contract before the nominal completion date. Once agreed, everyone signs – you, the employer and student (and the school for SBATs). You may be asked to agree to a pathway profile prepared by a school SBAT coordinator. You can attach this to your training plan as additional documentation.

During structured training

Monitor progress	Contact employers at least 4 times a year to monitor progress and confirm competence. We recommend in-person visits, but phone or email contact is also valid. Keep a record on the student's file of the contacts you make. During contacts, you'll document competency outcomes against the training plan. Employers need to sign off individual competencies for apprentices, or overall competency for trainees. If you do workplace-based training or assessment, you need to make additional visits to deliver it. These are a minimum of 1 to 4 visits a year, depending on the hours based in the workplace. They can count towards your 4 annual contacts requirement if you also discuss student progress or get the employer's sign-off on competencies. You must document these workplace training visits including: • the training delivered against the training plan, and • the signatures of both the employer and apprentice or trainee and the date. Make monthly contact with the workplace supervisor and the apprentice or trainee to confirm they've had paid time off work for structured training and learning. If not, you must advise the VRQA within 2 weeks. For each monthly contact, you must document the: • progress against the training plan • the training and learning done (non-routine work duties) with dates and times of activity from the previous month HSAT school-based staff will work with you to ensure you follow the Head Start requirements. They will visit the student's workplace at least once a semester.
Notification of events	There are key events you need to advise the VRQA, Apprenticeships Victoria or the Apprentice Connect Australia provider about. We have a clear table of events, who to contact and how soon in our 2026 guidelines about apprenticeship/traineeship training delivery. Some common examples include: An apprentice withdraws, drops out or never starts training Tell the Apprentice Connect Australia provider and employer within 2 weeks and report the withdrawal to us via SVTS. An apprentice loses their job Tell the Apprentice Connect Australia provider and VRQA within 2 weeks. You can likely continue some of their training while they find another job. Follow our guidelines for how to support and continue to train apprentices or trainees when they become unemployed or move to a new employer.
Training plan variations	When changes happen, support the apprentice or trainee to complete their training by making reasonable adjustments to their training plan. Variations need to be endorsed by the apprentice or trainee and the employer (and schools for SBAT/HSATs). You don't need everyone to re-sign the plan each time it changes. Keep records that document the discussion and endorsement of all parties – this is enough.

Ending structured training

Employer competency sign-off

Work with employers to confirm apprentices and trainees are competent.

Employers sign off:

- trainees on their qualification overall
- apprentices on individual or clustered competencies.

You can issue a qualification when:

- the apprentice or trainee has achieved all training plan competencies
- you have written confirmation from the employer of workplace competence
- you have advised the employer and apprentice or trainee that you have marked the training contract as complete in Epsilon.

If a student has completed all necessary training but you are waiting for the employer to sign off, work with the employer to try to resolve the issue. Report outcome identifier 79 (waiting employer sign off) until you receive it.

See the [Victorian VET student statistical collection guidelines 2026](#) for more information.

For SBAT students, you must provide the school with known subject results (for the current year). Report these progressively so the school can track progress. The latest you can provide these results is one week before the October cut-off date.

Support

For more information on supporting apprentices and trainees, visit [Apprenticeships Victoria](#).

Apprenticeship support officer program

Supports apprentices with confidential advice on work and training or personal issues.

Apprentice helpdesk

Offers free information for apprentices, trainees, parents, training staff and employers for support and advice on any questions about apprenticeships or traineeships.

Apprentice Employee Assistance Program

Free confidential short-term health and well-being counselling for apprentices.