

# Recommendation concerning quality apprenticeships

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An Australian perspective on  
an international framework

November 2023

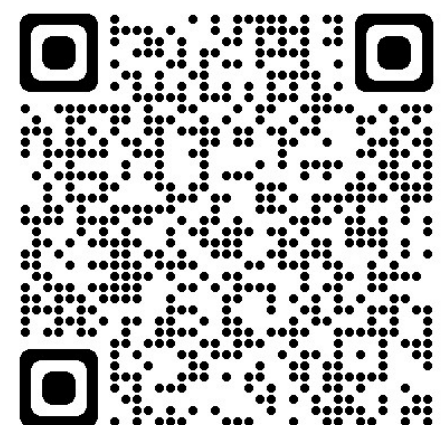
**GAN**  
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Skills for Business  
Jobs for Youth



[gan-australia.org/  
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GAN Australia pays respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the traditional owners of the lands on which we live and work. We acknowledge Elders past and present, and recognise the long history of cultural and educational practices of Australia's First Nations people.

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# About GAN Global



## Established in response to the GFC

The ILO, IOE and OECD established GAN Global to support the promotion of apprenticeship to get young people into the workforce and equip them with the skills needed for work.



## Focus on the future of work

GAN works with members, networks, and partners to deliver activities, publications and events that promote work-based learning and facilitate its implementation.



## Supporting international engagement

GAN participates in international policy processes and consultations, bringing in the experience of members and networks.

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# GAN AUSTRALIA

GAN National Networks are each hosted by an organisation.

GAN Australia is hosted by the Apprenticeship Employment Network (AEN).

The GTO model is recognised by GAN Australia as best practice in apprenticeship employment.

GAN Australia aims to support Australian understanding of international trends and best practice.

Hosted by  apprenticeship  
employment  
network

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The economic crash impacts youth employment across the globe.

2009

The Global Apprenticeships Network (GAN) is founded by the ILO, IOE, OECD, and Business at OECD.

2014

The ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships is first released to support policy makers and practitioners implement quality programs.

2017

GAN Australia is launched by the Apprenticeship Employment Network.

2019

2013  
The ILO starts a feasibility study to determine how an international business network on apprenticeships could add value.

2015  
The United Nations adopts the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2018  
GAN Global expand their focus from large employers to SMEs, in line with ILO priorities.

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The ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships is updated and discussions commence around a standard or recommendation.

2020

The Digital Skills Situational Analysis showcases differences between Australia, Columbia, and New Zealand.

2021

GAN Australia runs the Future of Apprenticeships conference in conjunction with Switzerland and New Zealand.

2023

Global Quality Apprenticeships employer accreditation will be launched.

GAN Australia will undertake a program of work including research and data analytics.

2024 - ongoing

2020

GAN Australia works with GAN Global and Microsoft Philanthropies on the Skills for employability project.

2022

The What will it take? report in collaboration with SVU and PwC looks at how we can create better and more sustainable jobs for young people.

2023

The ILO approves the Recommendation concerning quality apprenticeships.

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# GAN Australia activities



## Thought leadership

Inform industry and government on trends, challenges and best practice through research, data analytics, and promotion of external work.



## Employer accreditation

Support employers to meet quality standards. Accredite quality employers and promote the benefits of working for accredited employers.



## Apprentice exchange & scholarships

Support apprentices through scholarships and exchange programs. Promote the benefits of apprenticeships through winner case studies.



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# Quality apprenticeship research

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# Research: What are quality apprenticeships?

The ILO Recommendation concerning quality apprenticeships used inputs from industry, business groups and unions. It takes an international perspective.

How does the framework look against an Australian context? Does the framework match the perceptions of Australian Apprenticeship stakeholders? What are the main priorities for each cohort?



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# Quality apprenticeship research stages



## Stage 1: Mapping

- How do Australian frameworks match to the ILO framework?
- At what phase of the apprenticeship do the standards relate?
- What does existing data show us about achievement against the ILO framework?



## Stage 2: Perceptions

- What do apprentices, employers, and industry believe is quality?
- How does this match or mismatch against the ILO and Australian frameworks?



## Stage 3: Employer data

- How are employers performing against the frameworks?
- Where are gaps in quality for Australian and international employers?
- Recommendations to improve quality.



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# Recommendation concerning quality apprenticeships

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# Recommendation sections

I. Definitions, scope and means of implementation

II. Regulatory framework for quality apprenticeships

III. Protection of apprentices

IV. Apprenticeship agreement

V. Equality and diversity in quality apprenticeships

VI. Promotion of quality apprenticeships

VII. International, regional and national cooperation for quality apprenticeships



# Definition Apprenticeship

the term “**apprenticeship**” should be understood as a form of education and training that is governed by an apprenticeship agreement, that enables an apprentice to acquire the competencies required to work in an occupation through structured and remunerated or otherwise financially compensated training consisting of both on-the-job and off-the-job learning and that leads to a recognized qualification;

## Australia

Covers both apprenticeships and traineeships under a contract of training.

Covers ‘degree’ and ‘higher’ apprenticeships if they are covered by a contract of training, e.g. SA Government change to legislation to include degrees.

Does not cover internships, cadetships, pre-apprenticeships, or work experience.

# Definition Intermediary

the term “**intermediary**” should be understood as an entity, other than the host enterprise or the educational and training institution, that coordinates, supports or assists in the provision of an apprenticeship;

## Australia

Australian Apprenticeship Support Network providers - funded by the Australian Government.

Group Training Organisations - meet National Standards.

State Government support activities may fall within this definition - e.g. Apprenticeship Support Officers.



# Definition

## Pre-apprenticeship

the term “**pre-apprenticeship programme**” should be understood as a programme designed to help potential apprentices to develop their competencies with a view to improving their workplace preparedness or meeting the formal entry requirements for an apprenticeship;

# Australia

No agreed national definition of pre-apprenticeships.

Courses offered as pre-apprenticeships, pre-traineeships, pre-vocational, or pre-employment may fall within this definition.

Cert II accredited courses, e.g. the CII in Electrotechnology Career Start.

Multi-industry pre-apprenticeship programs, and other non-accredited courses.

# Definition RPL

the term “**recognition of prior learning**” should be understood as a process, undertaken by qualified personnel, of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying a person’s competencies, acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning, based on established qualification standards.

# Australia

Standards for RTOs cover the requirement for RTOs to offer RPL for learners. This includes apprentices and trainees, with exceptions for licensed trades.

Research shows issues with RPL in Australia, e.g. NCVET 2020 ‘Exploring the recognition of prior learning in Australian VET’.



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# Preliminary results

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# Regulatory frameworks

Members should adopt a process, in which representative employers' and workers' organizations participate, for determining whether an occupation is suitable for quality apprenticeships, taking into account:

- (a) the competencies needed to work in that occupation;
- (b) the appropriateness of an apprenticeship as a means of acquiring such competencies;
- (c) the duration of the apprenticeship required to acquire such competencies;
- (d) the current and future demand for skills in, and employment potential of, that occupation;
- (e) the occupational, training and labour market expertise of employers' and workers' organizations;
- (f) the wide range of emerging occupational fields, and evolving production processes and services.

# Australia

Jobs and Skills Councils develop qualifications.

Jobs and Skills Australia determines shortages, for use in incentives.

State and Territory Training Authorities consult with industry to determine whether a VET qualification should be an apprenticeship or traineeship, and the duration.



# Regulatory frameworks

Members should take measures to ensure that there is a fair and transparent process by which an apprenticeship can be undertaken in more than one enterprise, subject to the apprentice's consent, when this is considered necessary for the completion of the apprenticeship.

# Australia

State and Territory and Federal Governments have processes for training contract transfers. These processes aim to balance the issues of 'poaching' along with relative freedom for apprentices.

Traineeships typically have a lower threshold for transferring employers.

Group Training Organisations are somewhat unique to Australia. This is their core business.

# Protections

Members should take measures to ensure that apprentices:

- (a) receive adequate remuneration or other financial compensation, which may be increased at different stages of the apprenticeship to reflect the progressive acquisition of occupational competencies;
- (b) are not required to work hours that exceed limits specified by national legislation and collective agreements;
- (c) are entitled to holidays with adequate remuneration or other financial compensation;
- (h) are afforded protection and receive training in respect of occupational safety and health and in respect of discrimination and violence and harassment;
- (i) are entitled to compensation for work-related injuries and illnesses;

# Australia

Fair Work legislation and modern awards include cover apprentices and trainees.

There are national and state and territory standards for workplace or occupational health and safety.

Australian Apprentices are monitored by the AASN providers, state and territory field staff, regulators and ombudsman depending on the location.

# Apprenticeship agreement

Members should ensure that apprenticeships are governed by a written agreement that is concluded between an apprentice and a host enterprise or public institution and, if permitted by national laws and regulations, may also be signed by a third party, such as an educational or training institution or an intermediary.

# Australia

Training contract between the employer and apprentice, facilitated by the AASN provider.

Group Training Organisations, as the employer, will also have host employer agreements in place.

The RTO will have a training plan in place, which is a requirement of the training contract.



# Equality & diversity

Members should take appropriate measures to promote gender equality and balance in all aspects of apprenticeships, including in access to apprenticeships.

## Australia

While there is 'equal access' to apprenticeships and traineeships, there is a high level of gender segregation.

Upcoming Australian Skills Guarantee, and the Victorian Major Projects Skills Guarantee, both mandate women in trade apprenticeships workforce hours.

There are many barriers to overcoming these issues, but governments seem to have a focus on this.

# Promotion

undertaking awareness-raising activities and promotional campaigns at regular intervals to improve the image and attractiveness of quality apprenticeships by highlighting the benefits of apprenticeships to workers, young people, families, teachers, career counsellors, employers' and workers' organizations, and employers, particularly micro, small and medium-sized enterprises;

# Australia

National Careers Institute is working to promote apprenticeship pathways amongst other post-school pathways.

State and Territory Governments, and independent school sectors, also work to promote apprenticeships.

Industry bodies, such as the CITB in SA, run campaigns promoting apprenticeships.

# Cooperation

Members should take measures to:

- (a) enhance international, regional and national cooperation and exchange information on good practices, in all aspects of quality apprenticeships;
- (b) cooperate to offer expanded learning opportunities to apprentices and to recognize competencies acquired through apprenticeship programmes or prior learning;
- (c) build effective partnerships to promote quality apprenticeship programmes, including through tripartite national, sectoral or occupational skills bodies, global and regional alliances and apprenticeship networks;
- (d) promote the recognition of apprenticeship qualifications nationally, regionally and internationally.

# Australia

Australian government works with regional countries on skills policy and support.

They work with the ILO, IOE and OECD with respect to skills policy and information sharing.

GAN Australia is supporting these measures through our connections with GAN Global and GAN National Networks.



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## Summary

Australia has a very strong apprenticeships system. We have legislation and regulatory frameworks in place.

Data and evidence collection is also relatively strong. However, this evidence demonstrates that while Australia has a good system, there is significant room for improvement.

**NEXT STEPS:** Complete mapping, and collate data and other evidence to show where Australia is performing well, and where we need to focus improvements.



# Connect with us



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