



Australian Government

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# Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Operating Guidelines

For the Deed of Agreement Period:

1 July 2024 to 30 June 2026

Effective: 1 July 2024

Issue date: XX June 2024

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# 1 INTRODUCTION AND ROLES

## 1.1 Overview

The Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Operating Guidelines (Operating Guidelines) are issued under the authority of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the department).

The aim of the Operating Guidelines is to outline the operating procedures to establish and manage the Australian Apprenticeship Support Services 2024 – 2026 Deed (Deed), within the Service Region(s) specified in the Deed.

Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Providers (Providers) must comply with the Deed and its schedules, over the Deed Period. They must also comply with the:

- (a) Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Provider Code of Conduct (Provider Code of Conduct)
- (b) Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program Guidelines
- (c) Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System Guidelines
- (d) *Trade Support Loans Act 2014*
- (e) *Trade Support Loan Rules 2014*
- (f) *Trade Support Loans Priority List 2014*
- (g) Trade Support Loans Program Guidelines
- (h) Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Style Guide.

The definition of terms used in these Operating Guidelines can be found in Annexure A.

## 1.2 Operating Period

The Operating Guidelines apply to the Deed Period.

The department may vary the Operating Guidelines.

The final decision on the interpretation of the Operating Guidelines rests with the department.

## 1.3 Role of the department

The department is responsible for:

- advising relevant Minister(s)
- implementing the Australian Government's Australian Apprenticeships policies and programs.

The department, on behalf of the Australian Government, has contracted Providers to deliver Australian Apprenticeship Support Services (Support Services), a suite of services supporting Australian Apprentices and Trainees (collectively known as 'apprentices') from pre-commencement through to completion. The department is responsible for management of the Deeds and administration of the program.

The department will provide support and direction to Providers by:

- setting and communicating the overarching strategy for the program, providing a clear understanding of expectations through program inductions and clear guidance on departmental systems, governance arrangements and other areas to enable delivery of program outcomes
- developing and providing policy advice for Australian Apprenticeships, the Commonwealth Apprenticeship Incentives Programs (the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program (AAIP) and the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System (Incentives System))
- developing and providing policy advice for Trade Support Loans (TSL)

- tendering and contracting organisations to provide Support Services
- monitoring, reviewing and evaluating Providers' performance and compliance under the Deed
- collecting, analysing, reporting and publishing information on program outcomes
- making payments to Providers, employers, Australian Apprentices (apprentices), and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)
- receiving and investigating complaints
- investigating allegations or gathering evidence of fraud in relation to Support Services and entitlements under the Commonwealth Apprenticeship Programs (currently AAIP, Incentives System and TSL)
- managing and maintaining related Information Technology (IT) systems.

## 1.4 Role of the Providers

The Australian Government contracts Providers to deliver Support Services, and assist apprentices and employers access payments under the Commonwealth Apprenticeship Programs. This is a free service to employers, and apprentices and trainees (collectively known as 'apprentices') and other interested parties.

A Provider's role in achieving the desired Program outcomes include:

- providing high quality advice, regular communication and Support Services for apprentices and their employers
- ensuring apprentices and employers understand who their Provider is, what their Provider does and how to access Support Services from their Provider
- undertaking a pre-commencement assessment for every:
  - newly commencing apprentice
  - recommending Key Client Group apprentice, who are:
    - women in male-dominated trades
    - First Nations Australian Apprentices
    - apprentices with disability
    - apprentices located in Remote Australia
  - Employer Requiring Support
- Training Contract sign-up and administration, including:
  - advice on the need to report payroll information to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) through Single Touch Payroll (STP)
  - authentication requirements, and advice on payments management in the Apprenticeships Data Management System (ADMS)
  - eligibility assessments for the Commonwealth Apprenticeship Incentives Programs
- improving retention and completion rates, and satisfaction through the provision of mentoring and support to apprentices and employers while the apprentice remains in-training
- determining eligibility, and facilitating and administering payments to employers, apprentices and RTOs under the Commonwealth Apprenticeship Programs, as well as providing advice on how to access and submit claims in ADMS
- improving the visibility and/or marketing of apprenticeships as a pathway to learning, including to assist secondary school students to find the right Vocational Education and Training (VET) pathway or employment pathway
- ensuring apprentices and employers have a clear understanding of how to contact and access more support from the Provider
- minimising the administrative burden on apprentices and their employers by:
  - entering data into ADMS in an accurate and timely manner

- assisting apprentices and employers to navigate, and claim payments through ADMS
- utilising improved technology to increase and better target communications and streamline program administration
- working closely with State Training Authorities (STAs) and RTOs
- developing and maintaining productive working relationships with key stakeholders and referring eligible apprentices and employers (where appropriate) to relevant Support Services, including other state and federal government initiatives.

In addition to the general Support Services listed above, Providers have a fundamental role in supporting Key Client Group apprentices. Providers will support apprentices in Key Client Groups by:

- providing wraparound support, including regular Progress Contacts with Key Client Groups who may experience additional barriers to completing their apprenticeship
- ensuring all Key Client Group apprentices have access to Mentoring and Personal Support Services.

In providing these Support Services, Providers are required to:

- use skill, care and due diligence in receiving, assessing and processing claims for payments under the Commonwealth Apprenticeship Incentives Programs
- ensure the validity, accuracy and completeness of the information entered in ADMS and undertake checks to eliminate the duplication of records or omissions of information
- comply with the Provider Code of Conduct, which forms part of the Deed – Providers must display and make available to employers and apprentices a copy of the Provider Code of Conduct
- comply with the Support Services Record Rules (Record Rules) as set out in *section 6.2.3* of these Operating Guidelines
- assist the department to monitor and evaluate the delivery of the Support Services as set out in the Provider Deed
- attend to all requests to provide Support Services within the Provider's Service Region(s) as set out in the Deed.

### Commonwealth public officials

Persons who deliver Support Services, such as Providers, are 'Commonwealth public officials' for the purpose of several fraud-related sections of the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)*. In that regard, attention is drawn in particular to offences in the Code regarding the falsification of documents by a Commonwealth public official (s145.4) and to the giving of information derived from false or misleading documents (s145.5). In addition, giving false or misleading information to the Commonwealth is a serious offence under section 137.1(1) of the Criminal Code.

## 1.5 The role of State and Territory Training Authorities

The STAs are responsible for:

- all aspects of their training systems, including policies, delivery of training, regulatory and administrative matters
- administration of the National Training Contract (Training Contract)
- registration and approval of apprenticeships in their jurisdiction.

Providers must establish a strong working relationship with all STAs with whom they lodge Training Contracts and must deliver services in line with the relevant STA's requirements. The department's expectation is that Providers work with state government and local service Providers to build a strong understanding of, and provide education to apprentices and employers on, the differences between Commonwealth and State services. This will assist to limit duplication of services and effort.

## 1.6 Service Regions

*(Relates to section 2.5 of the RFT)*

Services are delivered on a regional basis comprising 9 Service Regions which are divided into Metropolitan, Regional and Remote zones – boundaries are based on the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geography Standard Edition 3*.

Zonal classifications determine fees paid to Providers for delivery of Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services.

The workplace address on the Training Contract determines the applicable Fee-for-Service (FFS) rate payable for Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services fees.

The Northern Territory will be subject to a separate purchasing process.

Providers must deliver services across the whole of their Service Region(s), unless they are a Specialist Provider who has been contracted to deliver specific locations, within a particular Service Region, only (*refer section 1.8 – Service Specialisation*) – Table 1 sets out the Service Regions:

*Table 1 – 2024–2026 Service Regions*

Service Region
Australian Capital Territory (ACT)
New South Wales (NSW)
Queensland ( <i>including</i> Torres Strait Islands)
South Australia
Tasmania
Victoria
Perth and Surrounds Western Australia
Outback Western Australia (SA4 <i>Outback North</i> and <i>Outback South</i> )
Northern Territory

### 1.6.1 Field officers

Providers must service their entire Service Region(s) through the ongoing presence of field officers and site(s) as nominated in their Deed.

#### **Provider field officer training**

The Provider is responsible for ensuring its field officers are trained appropriately to deliver relevant Support Services and must receive ongoing professional development to maintain currency of apprenticeship knowledge, including relevant knowledge of State and/or Territory requirements. Provider field officer staff undertaking sign-ups must operate within their level of training and expertise and with current and accurate information.

#### **Amendments to field officers**

Providers must notify their State Contract Manager (Contract Manager) if there are any proposed changes to the service delivery provided by their field officers.

## 1.6.2 Physical site and requirements

Support Services are required to be mobile, with guaranteed levels of face-to-face engagement and field officers providing localised services that are accessible and needs based. This may require a blended face-to-screen approach (such as visual electronic) in Regional and Remote areas to ensure services are accessible and timely. Generalist Providers must maintain a minimum of one full-time site for each Service Region (site arrangements for Specialist Providers were separately negotiated prior to the commencement of the Deed).

Accessibility of services for members of the public includes but is not limited to premises that are accessible to all members of the public (including those with disability); proximate to frequently visited services, amenities and transport networks; and offer a culturally safe and culturally aware workplace to deliver services.

Staff operating from these sites must be Provider personnel (other than reception and clerical staff, who may be shared employees). Staff must be available during operating hours to assist employers, apprentices and other interested persons who may visit or call to enquire about apprenticeships.

Full-time sites must have appropriate Provider and program signage, as designated by the department.

Where a Provider wishes to amend their site location or hours, they must seek approval from their relevant Contract Manager for this change. Each request will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Christmas Shutdown periods will be advised by the Provider's Contract Manager. Providers may request shutdown periods to cover exceptional circumstances (such as natural disasters) through their Contract Manager.

## 1.6.3 Site types

### Permanent Full-time sites

A permanent full-time site, at a minimum would operate Monday to Friday (public holidays excepted) from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm daily ('operating hours').

These sites may also accommodate other services. Providers must remain compliant with all requirements under the Deed, including privacy requirements under the *Privacy Act 1988*.

Closures outside of public holidays must be approved by the Contract Manager prior to closure.

### Permanent Part-time sites

A permanent part-time site will have a regular weekly presence with hours of operation less than a full-time site. These sites offer the same services as a full-time site, but with reduced days and/or hours of operation compared to a full-time site. These sites may also accommodate other services

The department does not require Providers to operate part-time sites.

### Outreach sites

These sites have no permanent presence, meaning they may operate on a monthly, seasonal, or 'as needs' basis at a local library, town hall, or other venue.

## 1.6.4 Remote islands

There are a number of islands that support apprenticeship activity around mainland Australia (including Norfolk and Christmas Islands). Different STAs have regulatory responsibility for these

islands. Providers must engage with the responsible STA to ensure servicing in these Remote localities is undertaken in accordance with the jurisdictional requirements.

### 1.6.5 Regional coverage

Providers must service their entire Service Region(s) as identified in their Deed and as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) maps. Providers must provide Support Services in a timely manner that suits the employer and apprentice's needs and expectations and requirements of the Provider Deed. This includes assisting apprentices to access formal training with minimal delays.

### 1.6.6 Servicing multi-region employers / Out of Region servicing

#### Overview and service requirements

A multi-region employer is an employer who employs, or intends to employ, apprentices in more than one Service Region. Where Providers service a multi-region employer in their Service Region(s), they may provide Support Services outside of their Service Region(s) for other apprenticeships with that employer.

Multi-region employer servicing is not available in the Outback Western Australia and Northern Territory Service Regions and the Torres Strait Islands (i.e. only Providers contracted to deliver services in the Queensland Service Region may deliver Support Services in the Torres Strait Islands). These Service Regions will be serviced exclusively by Providers with Deeds in these Service Regions – Providers with Deeds in other Service Regions cannot undertake servicing of apprenticeships within these Service Regions. Providers with Deeds in these Service Regions cannot undertake servicing of apprenticeships outside these Service Regions.

Providers may deliver Support Services to employers in respect of apprentices outside of their Service Region(s) where:

- the employer is a multi-region employer
- Providers already provide Support Services to that employer in their Services Region(s)
- Providers have met the requirements for service delivery with the Out of Region State Training Authority
- the Contract Manager has approved the Provider's delivery of Support Services to these employers outside of their Service Region(s)

Before Providers can undertake sign-ups for that employer in another Service Region, their initial contact and sign-up must be within their Service Region(s).

For the purpose of determining multi-region employer servicing eligibility, transferred business that occurs as part of transitional arrangements at the commencement of the Deed is equivalent to a sign-up.

#### Provision of Support Services outside of a Provider's Service Region

Prior to undertaking sign-ups for an employer outside of their Service Region(s), Providers must provide the department with evidence of their capacity, capability, and strategies to deliver Support Services in the other Service Region(s) for approval.

This evidence must be provided to the Provider's Contract Manager and include detailed information about the method that will be used to ensure quality delivery of Support Services out of their Service Region(s).

## Fees

Where Providers are delivering Support Services outside of their Service Region(s), fees payable are based on the zone (that is, Metro, Regional or Remote) of the apprentice's workplace. The rate payable is determined by the Service Region from which the Provider has a Deed (applicable unit price) to deliver services and the apprentice's workplace location (applicable zone) – refer section 5 of these Operating Guidelines.

## STA requirements

Where Providers service employers in a Service Region(s) outside their contracted Service Region(s), they must meet the requirements of the STA in the relevant jurisdiction. Providers must formally meet with those STAs within one month from when they commence servicing in that State or Territory with the meeting's intent to ensure that the Provider fully understands the STA's requirements for the delivery of Support Services. Providers must provide evidence of this meeting by completing the STA 'Out of Region' form and sending a copy of the completed form to their Contract Manager. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that, as a Provider operating outside their Service Region(s), they are aware of and comply with the local training legislation and requirements.

The department may withhold all future fee payments for servicing multi-region employers until Providers meet with the relevant STA.

## Determining the Service Region

In all instances, except where the employer is a GTO, the (full) workplace address as recorded on the Training Contract determines the apprentice's region.

Providers must ensure that they record in the Training Contract the correct (full) workplace address and postcode in line with the Australian Address Standards (for example, 10 Smith Street, Smithtown NSW 2222 – do not record as 'corner of XX and XX streets') and the appropriate region for servicing the apprenticeship.

For the purpose of determining if servicing is occurring outside of the Provider's Service Region(s) for GTOs, a GTO can only be considered a multi-region employer and eligible for Out of Region servicing if the GTO itself has a business address in more than one Service Region(s). Providers must service the GTO at a business address in the Provider's Service Region(s) first before seeking to service that GTO in other Service Regions. The address from which the GTO actually services the apprentice must be listed on the Training Contract, unless otherwise specified by the relevant STA.

## Northern Territory arrangements

The department has a joint Deed with the Northern Territory Government for the delivery of Support Services in this Service Region.

The Northern Territory is serviced by a single Provider under a joint deed arrangement between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory Government.

## Torres Strait Islands Arrangements

The Torres Strait Islands are part of the Queensland Service Region. All Providers servicing the Queensland Service Region must also service the Torres Strait Islands.

Only the Providers with Deed arrangements in the Queensland Service Region will deliver Support Services in the Torres Strait Islands.

## Outback Western Australia (Outback WA)

The Outback WA Service Region recognises the complex and unique servicing needs of this area.

Only the Providers with a Deed in Outback WA can service apprenticeships in this Service Region.

Outback WA Providers are able to undertake sign-ups in other Service Regions provided the workplace of the apprenticeship is in the Outback WA Service Region. For example: an Outback WA Provider can undertake a sign-up at an employer's head office in Perth for an apprenticeship that will be undertaken in their Service Region.

## Franchises

For Support Service purposes, a franchisor (head organisation) may be serviced as a multi-region employer if it handles all aspects of human resources for all national, state or territory franchisees.

Where this is not the case, franchisees are considered as separate legal entities because they have different legal names and do not meet multi-region employer eligibility criteria.

## 1.7 Subcontracting arrangements

*(Relates to section 3.5 of the RFT)*

Providers may use subcontractors to deliver services.

Providers must have provided details of any subcontractors engaged by the Provider, that meet the definition of a Material Subcontractor in the Deed as part of the tender process – that is, prior to commencement of the Deed.

Providers will remain responsible for the provision and quality of the services they subcontract, as well as:

- the actions of all subcontractors
- all losses caused by the subcontractors engaged by the Provider to deliver apprenticeship Support Services
- obtaining the subcontractor's agreement to the disclosure of its confidential information to the department
- the delivery of the relevant service requirements.

## 1.8 Service Specialisation

*(Relates to section 2.3 of the RFT)*

Providers appointed by the department are engaged as:

- a Specialist Provider
- a Generalist Provider
- both.

Specialist Providers must service apprentices within their specialisation(s), only, but deliver the full suite of services set out in *section 2 of these Operating Guidelines* to the Service Specialisation Cohort for which they have been engaged. Specialist Providers must have expertise in their proposed speciality/specialties either through direct experience or proposed subcontracting arrangements. Specialist Providers must provide tailored service provision to improve commencements and completions for the targeted group of apprentices as outlined below.

Where a Provider has been appointed by the department to deliver services within a Service Region(s) as a Specialist Provider, this will be acknowledged on all relevant department websites and the Provider must market itself as a Specialist Provider in all promotional materials.

Specialist providers should only service apprentices and employers within their Service Region(s). Specialist Providers are required to deliver services across the whole of a Service Region, except in cases where the Specialist Provider has been contracted to provide coverage for a specific location within a Service Region, only.

### Service Specialisation Cohorts

There are 3 Service Specialisation Cohorts:

- women in male-dominated trades
- First Nations Australian Apprentices
- Australian Apprenticeships working towards Clean Energy occupations.

**Note:** The remaining Key Client Group cohorts are not included in these Service Specialisation Cohorts. Specialist Providers will deliver the full range of Support Services to all apprentices within their speciality, where applicable.

#### Women in male-dominated trades

Specialist Providers for Women in male-dominated trades apprentices and their employers must help address challenges for this cohort including cultural barriers to participation, engaging in workplaces that can be inflexible with training and work hours, or lack the required support including necessary amenities for women.

Providers working with Women in male-dominated trades apprentices must have a strong connection and commitment to supporting better social and economic outcomes for women, particularly Women in male-dominated trades apprentices. Providers must drive progress on gender equality, particularly within the workplace, as well as meeting the gender targets under the Australian Skills Guarantee. They must have experience in the following areas, including but not limited to:

- working with employers to improve knowledge, address unconscious bias, and develop culturally safe practices in the workplace to better support women
- providing support:
  - with pathways and employment opportunities to attract and retain women
  - assisting with claims of bullying, harassment or antisocial behaviours
  - where issues of family and domestic violence arise, including duties under work health and safety laws and how to manage the impacts of family and domestic violence at the workplace
- creating or drawing on peer networks and industry connections that can help better support awareness of barriers to women's workforce participation and their contribution to Australia's future workforce.

#### First Nations Australian Apprentices

Specialist Providers for First Nations Australian Apprentices and their employers must help to address challenges for First Nations Australians, including, difficult working environments and attitudes towards First Nations Australian Apprentices, minimal engagement with Indigenous communities, and access barriers to the apprenticeship system. Providers must demonstrate expertise in the delivery of Support Services for First Nations Australian people and their communities.

First Nations Australian Specialist Providers must have a strong connection and commitment to supporting Indigenous business and communities to drive progress on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap measures.

Specialist Providers should have experience in the following areas, including but not limited to:

- fostering culturally safe practices and working with employers to enhance workplace cultural competency and safety as well as knowledge and respect for Indigenous culture
- providing support with pathways and employment opportunities for First Nations Australians
- understanding and drawing on the role and importance of Indigenous businesses and Community Controlled Organisations to local communities and apprentice employment prospects
- understanding the growth potential and broader opportunities within the Indigenous business sector to support employers.

### Apprenticeships working towards Clean Energy occupations

To develop the next generation of Clean Energy workers, apprentices in the Clean Energy Sector currently have access to supports through the New Energy Apprenticeships Program. This program opened in January 2023 and eligible full-time apprentices may claim up to \$10,000 in New Energy Apprentice Support Payments over the course of their apprenticeship (\$5,000 for part-time apprentices).

New Energy industries include work in solar installation, large-scale renewable projects, electric vehicles, green hydrogen, and renewable manufacturing.

A Specialist Provider must form deeper connections in the Clean Energy industry, build lasting relationships across the sector and ensure apprentices and their employers have the support needed to progress in their Clean Energy career now and into the future.

Specialist Providers are also required to:

- deliver personalised mentoring supports as outlined in *section 2.3 of these Operating Guidelines*
- build peer networking scale and capability, drawing on and building the strengths across the relevant Service Region(s) and its local networks to help apprentices adapt positively and productively to Australia's changing economic and social climate as it transitions to Net Zero
- have a detailed understanding of the current and future needs of the Clean Energy workforce, employer needs and training pathways for new energy industry jobs to inform those working or thinking about joining the sector
- use deep digital, sector or business-systems experience and expertise to build up the capability of apprentices to succeed in the workforce of the future, for example working with digitised tools and platforms, and working on new or evolving Clean Energy occupations and industries.

#### 1.8.1 Choice of Provider

Employers and apprentices in Service Specialisation Cohorts are able to choose the type of Provider they wish to be supported by (that is, Generalist or Specialist, where available) in their Service Region.

Where an apprentice fits into one of the Service Specialisation Cohorts, and where a relevant Specialist Provider exists, Providers must give the option to apprentices and their employers to choose their Provider prior to undertaking Assessment Services.

Where it is determined through the Assessment Services that an apprentice fits into one of the Service Specialisation Cohorts, the Provider must give the apprentice and their employer the option of choosing a Specialist Provider, or a Generalist Provider. This includes providing enough time and information for the apprentices and employer to make an informed decision.

The expectation is that the Provider places the apprentice's needs at the centre of service provision and supports their choice of Provider. Where the apprentice and employer choose to work with a Specialist Provider, a warm handover is required from the existing Provider to the Specialist Provider prior to sign-up. Ideally, this should occur prior to the delivery of Assessment Services to allow the Specialist Provider to have a relationship with the apprentice and employer from the beginning of the apprenticeship journey.

A Specialist Provider does not have exclusive rights to service all of its Service Specialisation Cohort in its Service Region.

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## 2 CONTRACTED SERVICES

### 2.1 Overview

*(Relates to section 2.1.2 of the RFT)*

The Support Services outlined in these Operating Guidelines aim to improve apprenticeship retention, completion and satisfaction rates through the provision of integrated, targeted support to apprentices and employers from prior to commencement to completion of their apprenticeship.

The suite of Support Services includes 3 types of services to be delivered nationally, which in combination is intended to offer a complete range of Support Services to achieve these objectives. These Support Services are:

- **Assessment Services:** a pre-commencement assessment for every newly commencing apprentice, Key Client Group recommending apprentice, and Employers Requiring Support. Assessment Services are focused on the development needs of the individual and, for Employers Requiring Support, an assessment of the employer’s capacity to effectively support the apprenticeship through to completion.
- **Mentoring and Personal Support Services:** mentoring and personal support to individuals including members of Key Client Groups, with places being tailored and demand-driven for their initial place. There are also capped Mentoring and Personal Support Services places available for Employers Requiring Support and non-Key Client Group apprentices who require support to remain in their apprenticeship.
- **Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services:** the essential marketing, administrative and payment support, stakeholder support, and engagement functions required to underpin the apprenticeship. This includes ongoing contact with the apprentice and employer throughout the life of the apprenticeship, provision of technical support, advice on the operation of the apprenticeships system, and specific requirements of the STA.

Providers are paid for delivering all contracted Support Services where all requirements outlined in both the Deed and the Operating Guidelines have been met.

**Figure 1 – Apprenticeship Support Services Journey**



Providers must establish relationships of trust with apprentices and their employers to ensure the apprenticeship arrangement operates effectively from pre-commencement through to completion.

The Support Services:

- place the apprentice at the centre of service provision through an enhanced assessment at the beginning of the apprenticeship to help set-up apprentices for success
- provide Employers Requiring Support with an assessment to ensure they are appropriately supported and the match with the apprentice is suitable

- improve wraparound support for Key Client Group apprentices who may experience additional barriers to completing their apprenticeship – these groups are:
  - women in male-dominated trades
  - First Nations Australian Apprentices
  - Australian Apprentices with disability<sup>1</sup>
  - Australian Apprentices located in Remote Australia
- deliver high quality end-to-end advice and Support Services to apprentices and their employers, providing a clear understanding of how to contact and access more support from the Provider, as is needed from time to time
- improve apprenticeship retention, completion and satisfaction rates through the provision of integrated, targeted support to apprentices and employers prior to commencement and while the apprentice is in-training
- minimise the administrative burden on apprentices and their employers.

### 2.1.1 Potential apprentices and/or employers

An apprentice and/or employer may contact a Provider to either:

- facilitate a sign-up where they have made the decision to enter into an apprenticeship
- seek job matching to find an employer/apprentice to undertake an apprenticeship or to
- Find out more about apprenticeships and traineeships

At this point, where it is clear that the apprentice is in a Service Specialisation Cohort, and where a relevant Specialist Provider is available in that Service Region, the Provider must advise the apprentice and employer of the Specialist Provider(s). The apprentice and employer must then choose the type of Provider they wish to be supported by (that is, Generalist or Specialist, where available). Giving the apprentice and employer the choice at this early stage allows a relationship to be built with the Specialist Provider from the beginning of the apprenticeship journey.

Where it is not immediately obvious that the apprentice is in a Service Specialisation Cohort, and the Provider undertakes Assessment Services (*refer section 2.2 of these Operating Guidelines*) the Provider must advise the apprentice and employer if there is a Specialist Provider(s) for their cohort in their Service Region. The apprentice and employer must then choose the type of Provider they wish to be supported by (that is, Generalist or Specialist, where available).

## 2.2 Assessment Services

*(Relates to section 2.2.1 of the RFT)*

### 2.2.1 Description and deliverables

Assessment Services are undertaken for potential apprentices and employers to determine their readiness and ability to undertake an apprenticeship. The assessment must be completed face-to-face (in person, or via visual electronic methods) with the apprentice, and via face-to-face (in person, or via visual electronic methods) or by phone with the employer prior to commencement/sign-up of the apprenticeship. The exact timing of when an assessment occurs is up to the Provider. Providers

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<sup>1</sup> It is up to the apprentice to self-declare that they have a disability and Providers need to determine this during the Assessment process, including the impact of the disability on the apprentice's capability to complete the apprenticeship. If required, and apprentices are eligible, Providers will assist apprentices to access Mentoring and Personal Support Services.

should ensure timing does not overload the apprentice and facilitates optimal decision making for the apprentice and employer.

**Assessment Services for apprentices** focuses on better identifying the apprentice's needs earlier and recommending tailored supports. This assessment identifies areas where the individual may require additional support including skills levels, skills needs and aptitude for occupations, and must also include a Readiness Check of an apprentice's language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) skills.

Assessment Services will be provided to all newly commencing apprentices and all recommencing Key Client Group apprentices.

**Assessment Services for employers** are targeted towards the suitability of Employers Requiring Support to take on an apprentice. This will include assessing an employer's suitability and readiness to take on an apprentice and may trigger a range of targeted responses. This could include supervisor mentoring where the employer does not have demonstrated experience in supporting apprentices to completion, or where the employer requests additional assistance.

**Employers Requiring Support** are employers of apprentices where, based upon the information available, the proposed apprenticeship would be at high risk of non-completion as a result of the employer having:

- limited or no experience in employing apprentices
- a history of poor retention or completion of apprentices
- fewer than 5 employees.

For all proposed apprenticeships, the Provider must check ADMS to confirm whether the employer has been/should be flagged as being an Employer Requiring Support.

As part of determining if an employer will require additional support, the Provider should also take into consideration any adverse findings by the Fair Work Commission (<https://www.fwc.gov.au/hearings-decisions/find-decisions-and-orders>) in relation to an employer (e.g., unfair dismissal, bullying) and, where appropriate, conduct an assessment of that employer.

Where the employer meets the definition of an Employer Requiring Support, the Provider must conduct an assessment of that employer. Assessment Services for Employers Requiring Support should be undertaken for the workplace of the apprentice. Assessment of Employers Requiring Support should not occur in the same workplace sooner than 6 months following the most recent assessment of that same workplace.

Assessment Services are intended to ensure that the apprentice and Employers Requiring Support are set-up to succeed, they are not intended to act as a barrier. Assessment Services must be delivered in a supportive and constructive way and avoid discouraging or intimidating potential apprentices or employers from commencing.

To deliver Assessment Services for apprentices and employers, Providers must:

- understand the individual apprentice's interests, skill level and skills development needs to assist them to identify the best apprenticeship pathway
- undertake a Readiness Check of the apprentice's LLND skills, and where supports may be required, make recommendations for support to the RTO or refer the apprentice for other support as appropriate
- assess the apprentice's suitability to undertake the proposed apprenticeship – where the Provider deems that the apprentice is fundamentally not suited to their nominated

apprenticeship (which is expected to only occur in very limited and critical circumstances), the Provider must discuss alternative pathways with the individual and support them through a 'warm handover' to access alternative support pathways

- where the employer is deemed to be an Employer Requiring Support, assess the employer's capacity to effectively support the apprenticeship and provide advice on the steps, supports and/or training they could access to set the apprenticeship up to succeed – where appropriate and available the Provider may offer a capped Mentoring and Personal Support Services place to the employer
- informed by all of these elements, undertake a risk assessment identifying the likelihood that the apprentice and employer will successfully complete the apprenticeship and record the outcome of that assessment in ADMS.

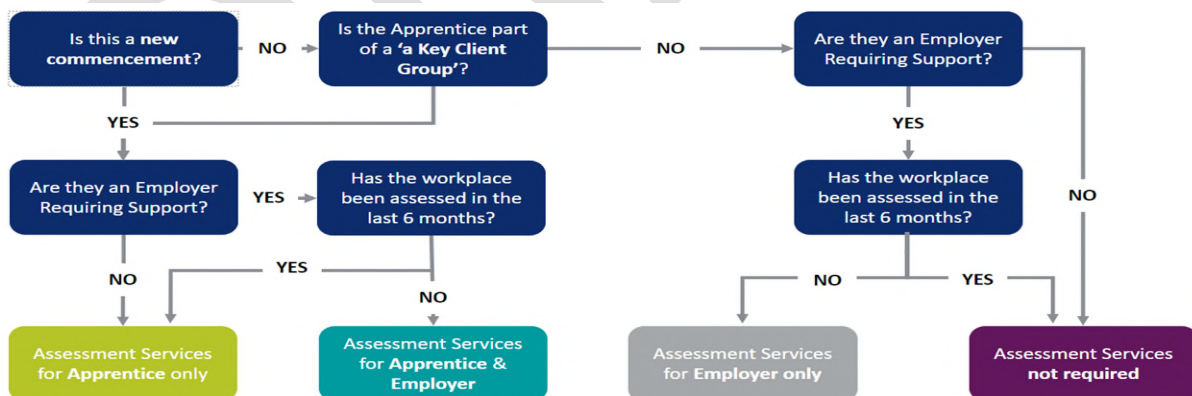
Where the apprentice is not in an identified Key Client Group and is considered at risk of non-completion (that is, an Apprentice Requiring Support), the Provider may offer a capped Mentoring and Personal Support Services place to the apprentice based upon the assessment findings and availability of places.

### 2.2.2 Participant eligibility

Assessment Services must be undertaken prior to Training Contract sign-up for:

- all apprentices commencing in a qualification/occupation for the first time (newly commencing), including those working towards Clean Energy occupations
- apprentices in Key Client Groups recommencing a qualification/occupation
- new and existing employers, deemed as an Employer Requiring Support, taking on an apprentice.

Figure 2 – Eligibility for Assessment Services



### 2.2.3 Assessment Services Readiness Check

The Readiness Check for apprentices will use a personalised approach, focused on identifying what targeted advice and support apprentices need to determine the right apprenticeship pathway for them. It consists of 2 key phases:

- understanding an individual's skill level, skill gaps, aptitudes and vocational interests (both in terms of subject matter interest and how they like to work) to identify if they are suited to the job they are considering and can meet workplace and off-the-job training requirements; and
- avenues of referral to assist the individual to succeed in an apprenticeship, including to recommend the right employment or training pathway if they are not apprenticeship ready at the time of engagement.

#### Duration

The department expects a Readiness Check should take approximately 30 minutes to complete (noting this is indicative only) and ensure the Provider has a thorough understanding of the apprentice's suitability for the proposed apprenticeship pathway. This includes the LLND assessment process, and opening up a discussion to identify if further assessment is needed.

In more complex scenarios, more time may be required (for example, up to an hour) to better assess the individual's needs and assist them to understand available support should they choose to progress with an apprenticeship, including discussing resources or referrals that may be available to them.

#### Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Readiness Check

Providers will record Readiness Check findings in ADMS and share with the relevant RTO (should the apprentice consent, and where appropriate) to inform support as they proceed with the apprenticeship. The department does not expect Providers to be qualified LLND practitioners, rather they must be able to conduct the initial LLND Readiness Check.

Providers must use the Readiness Check Tool

(<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.au/apprentices/how-to-find-and-prepare-for-an-apprenticeship/check-your-literacy-and-numeracy-skills/Readiness%20Check%20Quiz>) on the department's website to undertake the Readiness Check and will be provided with guidelines and checklists by the department to inform the conversation. Providers must use the Readiness Check Tool to gauge the extent of an apprentice's LLND capability and determine any necessary Support Services and/or referrals (as required) to assist them to become apprenticeship ready.

The department reserves the right to consider and make any necessary changes to the Readiness Check Tool. This may include (but is not restricted to) making updates to the prescribed Readiness Check Tool or requiring Providers to implement a new tool.

Providers may also utilise other tools (as agreed prior to Deed commencement) to supplement the department's Readiness Check Tool.

Providers should use information gathered from the apprentice's Readiness Check to help with goal setting and planning. Providers should be able to identify common issues facing apprentices in the local areas they are servicing, and the strategies that work best, or are required, to address these issues.

## 2.2.4 Measuring Assessment Services

A qualitative assessment of the actions/outcomes recorded in ADMS will be undertaken by the department quarterly to ascertain that quality Assessments Services are being undertaken – *refer to section 4 of these Operating Guidelines.*

## 2.3 Mentoring and Personal Support Services

*(Relates to section 2.2.3 of the RFT)*

### 2.3.1 Description and deliverables

Mentoring and Personal Support Services includes a broad range of activities to provide support to apprentices and employers to work towards successful completion of the apprenticeship. A mentor (person delivering Mentoring and Personal Support Services) can be a role model, coach, counsellor, or trusted resource.

Mentors must have well-developed interpersonal skills, demonstrating experience in client service, and be suitably qualified and experienced.

Providers must deliver Mentoring and Personal Support Services in a tailored manner, recognising the unique needs of apprentices in these groups. They may provide support and advice to apprentices and employers when additional support is required but they must not deliver services that are outside the scope of their experience or qualifications and must offer a culturally safe and culturally aware workplace to deliver Mentoring and Personal Support Services.

Providers are required to deliver tailored, personalised advisory services to eligible apprentices and employers across the Service Region(s) and have experience in:

- anticipating and advocating apprentice needs to enable engagement in the workplace, such as: reasonable adjustments and accessibility considerations; experience in developing healthy, culturally safe and culturally aware workplaces; and overcoming communication and psychological barriers
- engaging and consulting with Key Client Group apprentices (and/or their representatives) to provide them with support and assistance as required, and to understand and consider the extent to which existing workplace policies and frameworks support them
- engaging and drawing on staff with relevant lived experience and/or knowledge of the importance of lived experience and diversity in the Australian workforce context.

Supporting the apprentice and/or employer may require the intervention of additional Support Services such as drug, alcohol, mental health support or other services. Providers must provide Mentoring and Personal Support Services with a level of support that is commensurate with the level of staff expertise.

If Providers do not have appropriately qualified staff to deliver support in certain cases, the department expects them to source appropriate specialist services, either through subcontracting or referral to another organisation.

Providers are required to cover the cost of any professional development required to ensure Mentoring and Personal Support Services are delivered to the standard outlined in their business plan and agreed to by the department as part of the Deed.

Providers must have linkages with relevant support services to help transition or refer apprentices and/or employers to the appropriate service where this is required. Providers may choose to, but are not required to, pay for their clients to receive this specialist support.

### 2.3.2 Participant eligibility

Apprentices may access Mentoring and Personal Support Services more than once over the course of the apprenticeship.

Participants have been divided into 2 service groups – General Services and Enhanced Services – to reflect the level of priority to be attributed to servicing the different types of apprentices. The 2 groups are defined as:

- **General Services** – All apprentices who are not in a Key Client Group, **and** Key Client Group apprentices (excluding Women in male-dominated trades) whose original commencement was prior to 1 July 2024
- **Enhanced Services** – Newly commencing Key Client Group apprentices from 1 July 2024 **and** all Women in Male-Dominated Trades who commenced prior to 1 July 2024.

**Note:** As described above, Enhanced Services apprentices are a subset of Key Client Group apprentices, based upon the apprentice's commencement date. The concept of Enhanced and General Services applies solely to the delivery of Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support and Mentoring and Personal Support Services. This is distinct from the Provider Service Specialisation cohorts described at *section 1.8 of these Operating Guidelines*.

For Enhanced Services apprentices, Mentoring and Personal Support Services must be offered at each Contact Point where they have not already taken up a Mentoring and Personal Support Services place. Places for these apprentices are demand-driven for the first Mentoring and Personal Support Services place only.

General Services apprentices who are deemed by the Provider as an Apprentice Requiring Support at any stage during the apprenticeship will be provided with access to the capped Mentoring and Personal Support Services stream subject to availability of places as determined by the Provider. Providers may identify these apprentices at the sign-up, or during the apprenticeship apprentices may self-identify and be assessed by the Provider for eligibility and availability for a capped service place.

Employers Requiring Support may also be offered access to the capped Mentoring and Personal Support Services stream subject to the availability of places. Employers who are not considered to be an Employer Requiring Support but seek assistance to resolve an issue through their Provider, may also access capped Mentoring and Personal Support Services, subject to availability (determined by the Provider).

A Mentoring Service period is defined as a 12-month period from the date of the first Mentoring and Personal Support Services contact. Any requirement for mentoring support within that Mentoring Service Period for an Australian Apprentice or employer must be delivered as part of that initial Mentoring and Personal Support Service. Providers will only be able to offer a new, capped, Mentoring and Personal Support Service place after the first Mentoring Service Period is complete.

## Mentoring and Personal Support Services – apprentice

Mentoring and Personal Support Services targeted at apprentices should be tailored to best support the apprentice to successfully complete the apprenticeship. These services comprise support across 3 streams:

- **Pastoral Care and Complex Needs** – social and emotional support for the apprentice to enhance their wellbeing. Pastoral care can encompass regular, supportive contact with the apprentice to check in on their progress, to talk through and provide guidance on any issues that the apprentice may encounter in the workplace, in off-the-job training, or more broadly. The department expects that pastoral care will be a common support under Mentoring and Personal Support Services for apprentices in Key Client Groups who are progressing well in their apprenticeship.

The Provider will also deliver support to deal with complex issues that place the apprenticeship at risk of non-completion. This can include ongoing disputes with the employer, bullying, sexual harassment, personal or mental health issues, homelessness, and financial strain. Services to be delivered can include mediation (including support to resolve workplace disputes and allegations of bullying), counselling and referral to a specialist organisation for further action and advice (for example, drug and alcohol counselling, mental health supports, and domestic violence supports).

- **Career guidance and advice** – guidance in relation to career planning and transitional issues, such as change of employer, promotions, or the transition to open employment. Career guidance can draw on industry-specific mentoring where a mentor has suitable experience and expert knowledge of an industry and can assist the apprentice with particular career and skills development concerns or knowledge sharing related to that industry.
- **Peer support networks** – structured peer and/or industry support networks and knowledge sharing. Peer support networks deliver opportunities to connect apprentices and employers with business experts and/or comparable apprentice or employer peers across the apprenticeship. This stream aims to support improved workplace practices, build professional relationships, and offer insights and support to help overcome barriers to retention and completion.

Providers need to develop a strong trusted relationship with the recipients of Mentoring and Personal Support Services. The department considers this is best achieved through face-to-face contact.

The department requires that Providers create and deliver specific peer support networks for each Key Client Group cohort within their Service Region(s). Providers will have the flexibility to develop their own peer networking content to ensure the activities are tailored to meet the needs of their audience and/or reflect the Service Region in which the networking event is delivered. Providers may also draw on existing local or industry networks to engage with their audience, in particular for peer support networks offered to non-Key Client Group apprentices.

## **Mentoring and Personal Support Services – employer**

Mentoring and Personal Support Services targeted to employers of apprentices should be focused on:

- helping the employer to better understand their role in supporting their apprentice, including ensuring apprentices are provided with a safe and respectful workplace, free from harassment
- working with employers and supervisors to implement strategies to effectively supervise and manage apprentices in the workplace – this is particularly relevant to employers of Key Client Group apprentices who may have additional support needs, require reasonable adjustments, or greater workplace flexibility
- connecting employers and supervisors to Support Services and training to improve their capacity to effectively supervise and support their apprentices.

Employer training could include, but is not limited to, supervisory training that provides employers with essential skills and knowledge needed to keep and motivate apprentices (apprentice attraction and retention strategies). Mentors can also work directly with the employer and their business to: improve capacity to support apprentices; provide the employer with training on mental health and healthy workplace relationships and/or diversity and inclusion (dealing effectively with marginal groups). Employers may also be referred to other training where appropriate.

### **2.3.3 Administration of Mentoring and Personal Support Services**

#### **Tailored Support Plan**

Recognising that each apprentice and/or employer requiring Mentoring and Personal Support Services will have different needs and require different levels of support, Providers must create a personalised Tailored Support Plan (TSP) in ADMS for all apprentices and employers receiving Mentoring and Personal Support Services. The TSP is an agreed plan between the mentor and mentee (either the apprentice or employer) that details the services to be delivered by the Provider. The TSP must be shared with the mentee.

To receive payment for each of the 3 eligible Mentoring and Personal Support Services contacts, Providers must complete all fields in the TSP. The TSP should be updated after every Mentoring and Personal Support Services contact to reflect actions/updates, as well as recording the number and frequency of contacts, mode of contact (e.g., face-to-face, phone, etc.), any referrals made, and outcomes of the contacts. The department will monitor TSPs to determine the effectiveness of the services provided under Mentoring and Personal Support Services. TSPs that are not customised to the individual and only record generic or standard actions across multiple TSPs are not acceptable.

Providers must include enough information in a TSP to enable the department to assess the type and content of the support provided. This can include topics of discussion and action items but must reflect the individual circumstances and respect the parties' privacy. For privacy purposes, however, Providers must not elaborate on specific conditions or situations in the TSP, rather they should use non-specific terms – for example, 'bullying', 'homelessness', etc. – and should focus on impacts on the employment relationship (impacts should be specific to the individual, and not a broad impact such as 'at risk of non-completion').

#### **Mentoring Service Period and minimum contact requirements**

A Mentoring Service Period is defined as a 12-month period from the date of the first Mentoring and Personal Support Service contact. Any requirement for mentoring support within that Mentoring Service Period for an apprentice or employer must be delivered as part of that initial Mentoring and Personal Support Service. Providers will only be able to offer a subsequent, Mentoring and Personal

Support Service place/s to the apprentice/employer after the first Mentoring Service Period is complete. Any subsequent places will be dependent on availability under capped Mentoring and Personal Support Services.

The minimum requirement for the delivery of Mentoring and Personal Support Services is the development of the TSP and the delivery of at least 3 contacts with the mentee, at least 3 months apart. Each of these contacts must be a minimum of 15 minutes and be undertaken face-to-face (inclusive of visual electronic methods). Refer to *section 5 of these Operating Guidelines* in relation frequency/timing of payments. Where apprentices or employers have acknowledged in their TSP that they require further support, Providers must undertake additional, more frequent contacts which may be shorter in duration, and these contacts can be conducted either face-to-face, or by other modes if more convenient for the mentee. Payment for these additional contacts is covered in the 3-monthly Contact Payments.

### **Requirements for Capped and Demand-driven Mentoring and Personal Support Services places**

Access to either Capped or Demand-driven Mentoring and Personal Support Services places is determined as follows:

- General Services apprentice – subject to availability will receive services under a capped placement
- Enhanced Services apprentice – will receive services under a demand-driven placement for the first Mentoring Service Period and then a capped placement where subsequent need arises (subject to availability).
- employers – subject to availability will receive services under a capped placement – refer Section 2.2.2 Participant eligibility, above.

The department expects that the delivery of Mentoring and Personal Support Services through both demand-driven and capped places is of equivalent quality.

#### **Capped places – General Services apprentices**

This stream of Mentoring and Personal Support Services will be provided on an as-needs basis. For apprentices, this may be identified (by any party including the Provider) through Assessment Services or sign-up; where the apprentice requests assistance from their Provider, where the employer flags a concern about the apprentice with the Provider, or where the Provider identifies an issue. Providers must take every opportunity to promote Mentoring and Personal Support Services to apprentices to ensure they know they can approach the Provider to seek assistance.

Mentoring and Personal Support Services may respond to a range of issues that could impact the individual's ability to progress through their apprenticeship, such as homelessness, mental health concerns, caregiving responsibilities, bullying and other workplace concerns. Given the limitations on capped places, the department's expectation is that capped Mentoring and Personal Support places prioritise complex issues, and not solely for delivering pastoral care.

Additionally, employers of apprentices who need support and are struggling with an issue that could impact their apprentice's ability to progress through their apprenticeship can also access assistance, through capped Mentoring and Personal Support Services places, subject to availability.

Providers will be awarded an allocation of capped Mentoring and Personal Support Services places on a Service Region basis at the beginning of each Financial Year. The department may further

allocate Mentoring and Personal Support Service places within a Financial Year based upon Providers' delivery of their allocated places and the identified need for further support. Providers should prioritise access to capped Mentoring and Personal Support Services places according to those most in need of mentoring services support.

Providers who are a Generalist and Specialist Provider in the same Service Region will receive separate annual Mentoring and Personal Support Services caps for Generalist Services and each of their Service Specialisation Cohorts.

Although ADMS will send automatic emails to apprentices throughout the apprenticeship, advising of Mentoring and Personal Support Service availability, it is also up to Providers to promote Mentoring and Personal Support Services, in particular to Generalist apprentices, and employers not identified as an Employer Requiring Support, to ensure these cohorts have access to Mentoring and Personal Support Services when required. At the sign-up, Providers should encourage apprentices, and employers to self-identify and reach out to their Provider to access Mentoring and Personal Support Services during the apprenticeship lifecycle where required.

### **Demand-driven – Enhanced Services apprentices**

This stream of Mentoring and Personal Support Services is targeted towards Enhanced Services apprentices. Apprentices in this stream will have guaranteed access to tailored assistance for their first Mentoring and Personal Support Service place, and should be advised of this during Assessment Services, sign-up and Progress Contacts. Any subsequent Mentoring and Personal Support Services may be offered from the capped places depending on availability. Once any initial Mentoring Service Period has completed, as flagged by ADMS, Providers should follow up the apprentice/employer to gauge progress, and consider delivering a subsequent capped Mentoring and Personal Support Services place, if required and available.

### **2.3.4 Measurement of Mentoring and Personal Support Services**

Providers must meet KPIs 2 and 3 in relation to the delivery of Mentoring and Personal Support Services. Compliance with these KPIs will be monitored by the department.

## **2.4. Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services**

*(Relates to section 2.2.2 of the RFT)*

### **2.4.1 Description and deliverables**

Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services provide the essential marketing, administrative, payment support and stakeholder engagement functions required to assist individuals and employers engaged with the apprenticeship system to understand their roles and responsibilities and the system more broadly. The services include marketing, the Training Contract sign-up and contract administration, ongoing Progress Contacts, as well as Incentives System and TSL eligibility assessments, technical claim support, and the ongoing provision of routine advice to support individual apprenticeships. This includes advice on the specific requirements of the relevant STA.

Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services encompasses the ongoing provision of routine advice to apprentices and employers around the operation of their apprenticeship and the

apprenticeships system more broadly, including:

- responding to routine enquiries from potential apprentices and employers about matters such as: pay and working conditions; managing and attending off-the-job training; incentives and other payment eligibility; and any other matters that are routine in nature
- establishing effective working relationships with other Providers in the Service Region(s), to ensure coordinated delivery that supports the apprentice to stay engaged in their apprenticeship
- ensuring apprentices and employers understand the Provider's roles and responsibilities and where and how to seek further information and support
- the ongoing engagement between Providers and the department, such as responding to requests from the department about activity in a Provider's Service Region(s) and other management activities required under the Deed, such as reporting.

### 2.4.2 Participant Eligibility

Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services must be provided for all apprenticeships.

### 2.4.3 Marketing

*(Relates to section 2.2.2.2 of the RFT)*

#### Marketing and Promotion

Providers must undertake marketing and promotional activities to build awareness of the apprenticeship pathways in their Service Region(s) to current and prospective apprentices, employers, secondary schools, and career influencers/advisors. These activities are aimed at increasing the understanding of apprenticeship pathways and opportunities and improving apprentice retention and completion rates. Marketing and promotional activities must include, though are not limited to:

- promoting Australian Apprenticeship pathways through engagement with secondary schools
- promoting apprenticeship pathways at career expos and industry events
- using local media channels and social media to promote relevant good news stories
- engaging with business and industry to promote the benefits of apprenticeships
- engaging with training providers and other service providers to promote the benefits of apprenticeship pathways.

Providers must also establish, maintain and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders to encourage the commencement, retention and successful completion of apprentices. To develop and maintain effective stakeholder relationships, Providers will:

- maintain up to date information on apprenticeships
- promote the take-up of apprenticeships and other VET pathways
- increase promotion and awareness of apprenticeships pathways in secondary schools
- develop knowledge of training options offered by RTOs in their jurisdiction
- interact with local counterparts across government and industry to ensure optimal coordination of services and supports
- support coverage of service delivery to limit potential gaps in each Service Region

- identify themselves as Providers, as part of a national network, who provide a comprehensive Support Service in their Service Region(s).

### Engagement with secondary schools

The department expects Providers will engage with schools across their contracted Service Region(s), including those in Metropolitan, Regional and Remote Australia. The purpose of engagement is to improve the visibility of apprenticeships (including Australian School-based Apprenticeships-- ASbAs) as a pathway to learning. This includes assisting secondary school students to find the right VET pathway or employment pathways.

It is expected that all Providers in a Service Region will share visiting all combined and secondary schools within their Service Region over the 2-year period of the Deed. Visits should ideally be conducted face-to-face. The department acknowledges that, in some cases, face-to-face contacts through visual electronic methods will be necessary, in lieu of an in person contact. Providers in a Service Region must develop a joint School Engagement Plan in collaboration with other Providers in the same Service Region, and with key contacts in schools, ensure full coverage and avoid over or under servicing.

A joint School Engagement Plan must be submitted to the department by 31 August 2024, and include:

- a list of schools that each Provider proposes to visit (broken down by Provider)
  - Providers must attend an equitable mix of Metropolitan and Regional/Remote schools and the department expects that Providers should visit schools proportionately in line with the regional distribution of schools
- the number of schools each Provider will visit in 6-month periods across the 2-year contract (that is, 1 July – 31 December 2024; 1 January – 30 June 2025; 1 July – 31 December 2025; and 1 January – 30 June 2026)
- sign-off by each Provider to ensure that all parties are in agreement.

**Please note:** The department reserves the right to amend the Plan where it observes an inequitable split of schools between Providers and may allocate specific schools to Providers to ensure full coverage of each Service Region.

### Branding

Providers:

- must conform with all branding requirements outlined by the department in the Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Style Guide which will be given to Providers prior to the commencement of the Deed
- should work closely with State and Territory governments to ensure marketing and promotion focuses on the needs of the jurisdiction
- must draw attention to the information and resources available on the website ([www.apprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.au)) or additional information, as provided by the department from time to time, to increase awareness, build a common understanding of pathways and improve access to resources
- must market themselves as a Provider, using the appropriate signage and acknowledging the Australian Government, and undertake marketing in the local media that is consistent with the Australian Government's branding and marketing campaigns
- should produce promotional materials in line with their own unique branding, as well as using supporting material available from the apprenticeships website, such as factsheets, and *real*

*skills for real careers* communication and information resources available on [www.yourcareer.gov.au](http://www.yourcareer.gov.au) (previously [www.MySkills.gov.au](http://www.MySkills.gov.au)).

All promotional materials must:

- utilise the co-branding in line with the Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Style Guide
- include the *real skills for real careers* tagline, or other taglines as directed by the department.

The script “Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Providers are an Australian Government funded initiative” must be added to all radio and television advertising.

Providers must include the following statement on the homepage of their website/s:

*“[Insert Provider legal name] trading as [Insert Provider trading name] is a Provider contracted by the Australian Government as represented by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to provide Australian Apprenticeship Support Services to prospective and current Australian Apprentices, and employers of Australian Apprentices. [Insert Provider trading name] is one of a number of Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Providers in [Insert Service Region] or is the Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Provider in the Northern Territory (delete the statement that is not relevant). This website does not represent the Australian Government.”*

The department will supply Providers with an Australian Government logo for use in all publications, informational, promotional and advertising material, products and signage developed as a result of the Support Services, including correspondence and business cards. This includes any graphical or digital, web-based, television or visual advertising. Marketing, and the use of Australian Government logos, must be consistent with the Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Style Guide.

The promotion of apprenticeships and provision of basic information to employers and apprentices is part of Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Servicing requirements. Providers should promote themselves, particularly to apprentices, to build a relationship to ensure apprentices are aware of available Support Services.

The department will monitor the consistency of Provider sign-up packs with the Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Style Guide at its discretion.

### Co-branded marketing materials

Providers may undertake joint marketing activities and distribute co-branded marketing materials with approved subcontractors should they wish to do so.

#### 2.4.4 Sign-up

*(Relates to section 2.2.2.3 of the RFT)*

The sign-up of the apprentice and related administration is a key element of Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services. The department expects that Providers administer sign-ups in person (face-to-face) as the default channel throughout their Service Region(s). However, the department acknowledges that, in some cases, face-to-face contacts through visual electronic methods will be necessary. The output of the sign-up meeting is a completed Training Contract signed by all relevant parties and submitted to the relevant STA to register the apprenticeship.

Providers must ensure that apprentices and employers are given consistent and accurate information about their apprenticeship and the conditions, rights, and obligations for both parties under the Training Contract as well as advice on appropriate qualifications and relevant approved training providers. The department outlines the minimum information that Providers must deliver to

both parties at sign-up, below. This may change over the Deed Period, and if so, Providers will be notified.

Following sign-up, the Provider will lodge the completed Training Contract through ADMS with the relevant STA for approval and confirm the assessment of incentives eligibility for the employer and apprentice in ADMS. The Provider will retain responsibility for liaising with the STA in relation to the lodgment and status of the Training Contract throughout the apprenticeship lifecycle.

Providers must issue a copy of the *National Code of Good Practice for Australian Apprenticeships* to apprentices and employers at, or prior to sign-up. This document outlines the respective responsibilities of employers and apprentices under the Training Contract.

Providers must have knowledge of the client demographics in their Service Region(s), including labour market profile, education and training infrastructure, needs of the local markets and business/industry; and must have strategies in place to effectively engage with individuals, employers, and local industry bodies.

Acknowledging that not all sign-ups occur in the workplace, Providers must be assured that the nature of the workplace is appropriate for the apprenticeship being undertaken.

### **Sign-up contact (meeting/obligations)**

#### **Sign-up**

During the sign-up meeting, Providers must:

- ensure the appropriateness of the apprenticeship arrangements, including determining the appropriate qualification for the apprenticeship
- sight and document, but not retain, the identity of the apprentice – either:
  - one photo identification such as a driver's licence, passport or school identification card; or
  - 2 other forms of identification such as a birth certificate, Medicare card or bank card

#### **Training Contract**

- assist employers and apprentices to understand and complete Training Contracts – making sure that Training Contracts have been fully and accurately completed and that they comply with State or Territory requirements
- where the apprentice is aged under 18, discuss the requirements of the Training Contract with the apprentice's parent/guardian – this includes the apprentice's obligation to be aware of and make a commitment to fulfil work and training responsibilities
  - where an apprentice does not have a parent/guardian, Providers must discuss with the apprentice the obligations under the Training Contract, placing particular emphasis on ensuring the apprentice is aware of their obligation to notify the Provider of any change of circumstance
- ensure that all apprentices and employers are provided with consistent and accurate information about what their apprenticeship will entail and their obligations as well as the assistance offered by the employer, the RTO, State/Territory government and the Provider
- issue a sign-up pack to the apprentice and employer, in a format that suits the apprentice and employer – that is, hard copy or electronic (if not already issued prior to sign-up). A copy of the Provider Code of Conduct should also be provided
- provide a copy of the Australian Government publication *National Code of Good Practice for Australian Apprenticeships* and explain their rights and responsibilities under the Training Contract as set out in this document
- facilitate and administer the completion of the Training Contract utilising electronic forms

- part of the completion of the Training Contract involves the collection of both the employer and apprentice's signatures
- if Providers contact the employer and the apprentice separately, they must obtain signed verification on each occasion
- discuss the roles and responsibilities of the different parties to the apprenticeship as outlined in the *Sign-Up Visit Discussions* document

#### *Incentives System Payments*

- explain to the employer and apprentice the eligibility requirements of the Incentives System payments and issue them with a schedule of their eligible payments following sign-up. Providers should also ensure the employer and apprentice know-how and when to claim. Where appropriate, this may include information and advice on Disability Australian Apprentice Wage Support (DAAWS), Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHA), and TSL eligibility including due diligence information for minor apprentices (aged under 18 years) and their parents/ guardians

**Note:** Providers must advise any relevant employers that, from 1 July 2022, as per *section 1.2(d)(v) of the Incentives System Guidelines*, an employer is not eligible for any employer payments under the Incentive System if they are an organisation included on the National Redress Scheme website, on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme' ([www.nationalredress.gov.au](http://www.nationalredress.gov.au)). Providers should search the list prior to the sign-up, and where an employer is listed, the Provider must update the employer's incentives eligibility status to 'ineligible' in ADMS.

- ensure eligible apprentices who wish to apply for TSL:
  - are provided relevant information about TSL. For example, a completed application must be submitted in ADMS prior to the last day of the first month of the apprenticeship in order for TSL to be payable for that month
  - provide evidence of residency – this can be provided at sign-up or when the TSL application is submitted – note that New Zealand citizens are ineligible for TSL
- advise New Zealand passport holders that they may be required to provide evidence showing they have resided in Australia for 6 months or more to attract Australian Government payments
- explain to employers the need to register and report through STP for wage reporting to the ATO in order to be eligible to receive wage subsidies and provide them with a Single Touch Payroll factsheet. Provide advice on how to contact the ATO if required or where appropriate record details of the employer's exemption to submission of STP
- offer to help the employer and apprentice, where applicable, obtain a myGovID and set-up their myGov account
- promote and support use of ADMS, including assisting the apprentice and employer to access ADMS
- provide the apprentice and employer with an opportunity to choose the RTO that best suits their needs

#### *Contacts and Services*

- ensure the employer and apprentice understand the Provider is the key contact in the event there are any concerns for either the employer or apprentice about the apprenticeship as it progresses
- discuss ongoing Progress Contacts, with both the employer and apprentice, including:
  - expectations around timing and the importance of these contacts
  - the various modes of contact – that is, via ADMS, or via the Provider

- request the apprentice and employer enter the Provider's contact details in their phone for ease of contacting their Provider if they are experiencing an issue with their apprenticeship, and in order to support the receipt of phone calls and texts from the Provider
- explain that if at any time during their apprenticeship, an apprentice or employer requests contact with the Provider, the contact must be dealt with within 2 Business Days, and if the Provider is concerned about the apprentice's wellbeing, or considers that the apprenticeship is at risk, they must ensure that follow up contact is made with the apprentice/employer within 24 hours of the first contact that raises the concern
- advise apprentices and employers of Mentoring and Personal Support Services available throughout the apprenticeship term by:
  - offering Mentoring and Personal Support Services to all Enhanced Services apprentices
  - making an initial assessment as to the need to offer a capped Mentoring and Personal Support Services placement for employers and apprentices who are not an Enhanced Services apprentice
  - encouraging apprentices, and employers who are not Employers Requiring Support, to self-identify and reach out to their Provider to access Mentoring and Personal Support Services during the apprenticeship lifecycle, where required

#### *New Energy*

- where the apprenticeship has a Clean Energy Pathway, a declaration must be acknowledged by the Provider in ADMS after receiving agreement to the following statements by:
  - the employer:
    - stating their commitment to undertake work in a Clean Energy Sector
    - undertaking to provide the apprentice with a significant proportion of their work in the Clean Energy Sector on an ongoing basis and at commencement or recommencement
    - agreeing to provide the apprentice with ongoing on-the-job training in Clean Energy work and/or project(s)
  - the apprentice:
    - stating their commitment to build skills in a Clean Energy occupation, including selecting Clean Energy electives in their training, where available and appropriate
    - other tasks as directed by the department, within the parameters of the Deed
- advise employers of apprentices undertaking an apprenticeship with a Clean Energy Pathway; and apprentices in receipt of New Energy Apprentice Support Payment (NEASP) that, where New Energy activities cease prior to completion of the apprenticeship, they must notify their Provider immediately, allowing the Provider to override eligibility for NEASP and reassess eligibility for the Australian Apprentice Training Support Payment (AATSP), to avoid any potential NEASP overpayments paid to the apprentice
- develop and maintain productive working relationships with key stakeholders, and Specialist Providers with a Clean Energy service specialisation.

#### *Other requirements*

In addition to the requirements outlined above, Providers will also undertake tasks prescribed by the STA in relation to sign-up. In some jurisdictions, this includes meeting other STA requirements regarding the lodgement of Training Contracts (such as the Supervising Registered Training Organisation declaration in Queensland).

The apprenticeship sign-up must be undertaken in accordance with these Operating Guidelines, STA requirements (including individual state/territory backdating provisions), and within prescribed timeframes.

The department reserves the right to attend sign-up meetings and review sign-up packs to ensure requirements are being met.

### Sign-up pack

Providers must provide employers and apprentices with a sign-up pack prior to, or during the sign-up meeting in a format preferred by the recipient (that is, hard copy or electronic). This pack must contain key documents that help to inform the participants about the arrangement they are entering into.

The following documents that must be included in this pack at a minimum (refer Table 2). Providers may add any further documents to the pack.

*Table 2 – Mandatory sign-up pack documents*

Document	Apprentices	Employers
National Code of Good Practice for Australian Apprenticeships	Y	Y
Unique Student Identifier factsheet	Y	N
All relevant apprentice claim factsheets	Y	N
All relevant employer claim factsheets	N	Y
Trade Support Loans	Y	N
Fair Work Ombudsman Guide to starting an apprenticeship	Y	N
Fair Work Ombudsman Guide to taking on an apprentice	N	Y
Single Touch Payroll factsheet	N	Y
Accessing ADMS factsheet	Y	Y
Relevant Provider Contact Details	Y	Y

Any further additions to the sign-up pack must be appropriately branded, meet with the requirements of the Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Style Guide, and be tailored to the apprentice and employer to streamline the sign-up process and the amount of information provided at this time.

### Sign-up meeting timeframes

As the Training Contract is a legal document governing the employment arrangement between the employer and Australian Apprentice, it is important that sign-up occurs as closely as possible to the commencement date.

### Pre-commencement sign-up

The department will only accept sign-ups occurring **no more than one calendar month** prior to commencement of the apprenticeship. Where the sign-up has occurred prior to commencement of the apprenticeship, Providers must subsequently verify with the employer on, or after the date of commencement, that commencement has occurred. This may be by phone contact. This contact must be recorded in ADMS with the name of the employer (or employer representative), their position in the organisation, date of contact, any issues identified, as well as the name of the Provider representative making the contact.

For example, if an apprentice commences on 1 August 2024 and the sign-up was on or after 1 July 2024, then Providers may make phone contact to confirm commencement, rather than undertaking another visit.

### **Post-commencement sign-up**

Where Providers are unable to conduct the apprenticeship sign-up at commencement, all sign-up requirements must occur as soon as possible (based on the employer's and apprentice's circumstances, not the Provider's circumstances) after the commencement date of the apprenticeship. Please note that STAs may set maximum time periods for backdating the commencement date of an apprenticeship, and this differs between states/territories.

#### Sign-up within 6 months of commencement

In circumstances outside the Provider's control, the department will allow Providers up to 6 months, measured from the commencement date entered on the Training Contract, to conduct the apprenticeship sign-up with the employer and the apprentice.

These circumstances will be the result of employer or apprentice activity, not the Provider's circumstances. Some examples include where the apprentice is working on a secure site; access is limited due to weather and road conditions in Remote areas; or the apprentice is working offshore.

#### Sign-up more than 6 months after commencement

Only in exceptional circumstances will the department allow Providers more than 6 months, measured from the commencement date on the Training Contract, to conduct the apprenticeship sign-up with the employer and apprentice.

Providers must contact their departmental Contract Manager to discuss the exceptional circumstances they believe justify the delay in conducting the apprenticeship sign-up with either the employer and/or the apprentice and ensure that the relevant STA will accept the Training Contract.

The Provider's Contract Manager will need to agree that the circumstances are exceptional and therefore constitute a reasonable justification for delay. The commencement fee will only be payable to Providers where they have provided a reasonable explanation to the satisfaction of the department as to why they did not conduct the sign-up at commencement or why they did not conduct the sign-up within 6 months of the commencement date of the apprenticeship.

In all cases of delay, Providers must record a detailed explanation of the circumstances where the sign-up did not occur at commencement or within 6 months of the commencement date of the apprenticeship.

### **Sign-ups where a Group Training Organisation (GTO) is the employer**

Where a GTO employs an apprentice, Provider obligations will be met if they visit the apprentice at the GTO's premises. The host employer is not required to be present at this apprenticeship sign-up.

### **Sign-up and ADMS**

Providers will collect apprentice and employer information (on Training Contracts and claim forms) via e-lodgement. Following their submission, Training Contracts will be automatically transferred into ADMS for Provider finalisation.

### **Eligibility Advice Letters**

Providers must provide employers and apprentices with written advice regarding their eligibility under the Incentives System within **10 working days** from the sign-up contact. This advice must include a schedule of eligible payments so it is clear when they will need to claim.

The exception is where information has not been provided to a Provider that is crucial to the eligibility assessment. Examples of this could include prior qualification details, previous employment periods, or existing worker periods that require confirmation.

In this case, Providers must provide written advice **within 10 working days** from the date they receive this delayed information and keep apprenticeship file notes outlining the information they were waiting for, and the steps undertaken by Providers to obtain this information.

All employers must be provided with written eligibility advice letters irrespective of their eligibility for payments under the Incentives System (that is, they must receive an advice letter even if they are not eligible for any payments). Only apprentices eligible for payments should receive written advice letters.

### Monitoring sign-ups

The department will monitor the sign-up process by attending sign-ups as agreed with the Provider, and it will request sign-up packs for review at the department's discretion.

### Inappropriate sign-ups

The sign-up is a crucial stage of the apprenticeship arrangement, and it is the role of the Provider to ensure that this is undertaken with the best interests of both the apprentice and employer in mind.

Providers must undertake their role in this process in line with the Provider Code of Conduct and must be mindful of undertaking sign-ups where they have concerns about the appropriateness of the arrangement, the likelihood of completion or adherence to requirements as stipulated by the relevant STA for the arrangement.

Where a Provider attends a sign-up meeting and has concerns regarding the legitimacy of the arrangements, they must not undertake the sign-up and must refer this to their STA or Contract Manager for further advice as a priority. If there are concerns about the behaviour of the RTO, this matter should be also referred to the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

Providers should ensure the qualification linked to the apprenticeship arrangement is genuinely appropriate for the apprentice's occupation, role and responsibilities.

Inappropriate sign-ups are defined in Annexure A – Definition of Terms.

## 2.4.5 Training Contract administration

### Procedural requirements for processing Training Contracts

E-lodgement will automatically send a copy of the Training Contract to both the employer and apprentice, however, Providers may provide copies at the time of sign-up or following lodgement by any means including electronic transfer.

### Signing electronic Training Contract

Providers must ensure that electronic signatures collected on devices are 'legible and replicable'. This can be achieved effectively by using a stylus where possible to record the signature.

### Protocol to minimise the handling of Training Contracts

States, Territories and the Australian Government have agreed to the following protocol, with the intention to reduce the number of circumstances in which a Training Contract is returned to employers and apprentices for additional information.

The Training Contract is the legal document that underpins the arrangement between an employer and employee within the Australian Apprenticeship Framework. To this end, changes that materially affect the intent and purpose of this arrangement must be supported by a record of appropriate evidence that is maintained on the apprenticeship file.

Information contained in the Training Contract that does not relate to its intent and purpose, such as information regarding payments, audit, statistics and demography can be amended without being verified by the parties. However, Providers must obtain and maintain a documented record supporting any such variations. Suitable formats are described below in 'Changes and amendments prior to lodgement' or 'Changes and amendments after lodgement'.

### Changes and amendments prior to lodgement

Changes should not be made to the Training Contract document once it has been signed by the parties. However, where changes are necessary after signature and prior to lodgement, they must be made in line with the STA requirements outlined below.

Both parties must agree to changes that materially affect the intent and purpose of the Training Contract.

#### For Training Contracts in all States and Territories except Tasmania

Providers must obtain and retain on the apprenticeship file, either:

- an email trail showing consent by both parties confirming they agree to the amendment; OR
- a copy of the PDF version of the Training Contract with amendments initialled.

NSW and the Australian Capital Territory require Providers to submit the email trail or a scanned amended and initialled hard copy of the Training Contract and may request additional supporting information for some amendments.

#### For Training Contracts in Tasmania

Amendments and updates to Training Contracts in Tasmania must adhere to the requirements set out in the *Training Contract Amendment Requirements* document, as agreed to by the department and the Tasmanian Department of State Growth (and its iterations).

### Changes and amendments after lodgement

Any changes to the Training Contract after lodgement for approval, manually or electronically, must be notified to the relevant STA in the form and format required by that jurisdiction. Where existing provision for notification exists within individual States and Territories, Providers must continue to comply with those provisions.

### Finalising cancelled records

Where the apprenticeship is cancelled, Providers must make a concerted effort to find out why the apprenticeship was cancelled and, where required, finalise the record in ADMS. These efforts must be recorded in the apprenticeship file.

## 2.4.6 Progress Contacts

*(Relates to section 2.2.2.6 of the RFT)*

Regular contact with apprentices is important throughout the life of the apprenticeship, particularly in the early stages of training where the likelihood of cancellation is greatest. To that end, the department, via ADMS, in concert with Providers will regularly contact apprentices to promote available apprenticeship support.

Progress Contacts between a Provider and an apprentice or employer offer an opportunity for any potential issues with the arrangement to be identified and resolved. Each apprenticeship is unique and as such, the Progress Contacts can be tailored to suit the parties involved in the arrangement.

To align fees with effort, Progress Contact requirements have been aligned to the service group the apprentice is in – that is, General Services or Enhanced Services.

### Progress Contacts for General Services apprentices (refer Table 3)

Once the Provider has completed the sign-up, Training Contract lodgement, and incentives eligibility assessment, the department will contact General Services apprentices at 7 weeks, 3 months, 7 months, 12-18 months, 18-24 months and at the 36-month point of the apprenticeship (where relevant), using a set of messages delivered through ADMS via email. The contacts will act as a reminder to claim available financial incentives and raise awareness of the availability of support through their Provider, and the broader apprenticeship system, in the event the apprentice has issues or concerns during their apprenticeship.

The Provider must contact the employer and apprentice on, or within 4 weeks of either the expected completion, or the actual completion date, whichever comes first for all General Services apprenticeships. This contact is intended to ensure that the employer and apprentice are supported to finalise the administrative elements of the apprenticeship.

Table 3 below sets out the timelines of Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Services including minimum Contact Points, type of contact, method of contact and contact originator for General Services apprentices.

Table 3 – Progress Contact Regime for **General Services** apprentices (minimum contacts)

Contact Point*	Service**	Contact Type	Contact by
Marketing/Promotion	Information and advice	Face-to-face (expo) Flyers Advertisements	Provider
Assessment Services	Assess apprentice and Employers Requiring Support to determine ability/ readiness to undertake an apprenticeship	<b>Apprentice:</b> Face-to-face (in person, or via visual electronic methods) <b>Employer Requiring Support:</b> Face-to-face (in person, or via visual electronic methods) or by phone	Provider
Sign-up	Sign-up	In person face-to-face (Visual electronic face-to-face methods only where necessary)	Provider
Commencement – 6 months	7-week contact	Email	Department
	3-month contact	Email	Department
6–12 months	New Energy Apprentice spot check (if eligible)	Workplace visit	Provider
	7-month contact	Email	Department
12-18 months	12–18-month contact	Email	Department
18-24 months	18–24-month contact	Email	Department
24-36 months	New Energy Apprentice spot check (if eligible)	Workplace visit	Provider
	36-month contact	Email	Department
Completion	Completion contact	Face-to-face (in person, or via visual electronic methods), or phone	Provider

\*The apprentice, employer or Provider may initiate any number of contacts outside of the Progress Contact timeline

\*\*With the exception of the completion contact, all other contacts will only occur if the Contact Point/Progress Contact occurs prior to the cancellation/completion date

### **Progress Contacts for Enhanced Services apprentices (refer Table 4)**

For Enhanced Services apprentices, at a minimum, Providers will be required to undertake the 7-week, 3-month and 7-month contacts in the form specified in Table 4. At each Contact Point, the Provider must offer Mentoring and Personal Support Services to the apprentice where these services have not already been accessed – noting the Provider should check ADMS to determine whether Mentoring and Personal Support Services have been previously accessed – *refer to Mentoring and Personal Support Services at section 2.3 of these Operating Guidelines.*

In addition, the department will undertake digital contacts at the 12-18 months, 18-24 months and at the 36-month points of the apprenticeship (where relevant), using a set of messages delivered through ADMS via email.

The Provider must contact the employer and apprentice on, or within 4 weeks of either the expected completion, or the actual completion date, whichever comes first for all Enhanced Services apprenticeships. This contact is intended to ensure that the employer and apprentice are supported to finalise the administrative elements of the apprenticeship.

Table 4 below sets out the timelines of Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Services including minimum Contact Points, type of contact, method of contact and contact originator for Enhanced Services apprentices.

Table 4 – Progress Contact Regime for **Enhanced Services** apprentices (minimum contacts)

Contact Point*	Service**	Contact Type***	Contact by
Marketing/Promotion	Information and advice	Face-to-face (expo) Flyers Advertisements	Provider
Assessment Services	Assess apprentice and Employers Requiring Support to determine ability/ readiness to undertake an apprenticeship	<b>Apprentice:</b> Face-to-face (in person, or via visual electronic methods) <b>Employer Requiring Support:</b> Face-to-face (in person, or via visual electronic methods), or by phone	Provider
Sign-up	Sign-up	In person face-to-face <i>(Visual electronic face-to-face methods only where necessary)</i>	Provider
Commencement – 6 months	7-week contact <i>(2 weeks either side of Contact Point is acceptable)</i>	In person face-to-face <i>(Visual electronic face-to-face methods only where necessary)</i>	Provider
	3-month contact <i>(2 weeks either side of Contact Point is acceptable)</i>	In person face-to-face <i>(Visual electronic face-to-face methods only where necessary)</i>	Provider
6–12 months	New Energy Apprentice spot check (if eligible)	Workplace visit	Provider
	7-month contact <i>(2 weeks either side of Contact Point is acceptable)</i>	In person face-to-face <i>(Visual electronic face-to-face methods only where necessary)</i>	Provider
12-18 months	12-18-month contact	Email	Department
18-24 months	18–24-month contact	Email	Department
24-36 months	New Energy Apprentice spot check (if eligible)	Workplace visit	Provider
	36-month contact	Email	Department
Completion	Completion contact	Face-to-face (incl visual electronic methods), or by phone	Provider

\*The apprentice, employer or Provider may initiate any number of contacts outside of the Progress Contact timeline

\*\*With the exception of the Completion contact, all other contacts will only occur if the Contact Point/Progress Contact occurs prior to the cancellation/ completion date

\*\*\*In relation to Contact Types:

- Where the specified contact type cannot be undertaken (e.g., due to a request by the apprentice/employer), requests to contact via any other channel must be approved by the Provider's Contract Manager; and
- 'Phone' contact is any platform where a verbal conversation can be had (other than face-to-face)

Providers must maintain a record of each Progress Contact in the relevant contact in ADMS, including a reason for any contact made outside of the allowable 4-week window.

### Additional Progress Contacts for New Energy Apprentices

In addition, for both General Services and Enhanced Services apprentices, where the apprentice is eligible for NEASP, the Provider will undertake an on-site spot check in the apprenticeship workplace once between the 6 and 12-month points from commencement and once between the 24 and 36-month points from commencement. Spot checks are intended to ascertain that the employer and apprentice are actively engaged in the Clean Energy Sector.

## Participant eligibility

Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services must be provided for all apprenticeships.

Progress Contacts between a Provider and an apprentice or employer offer an opportunity for any potential issues with the arrangement to be identified and resolved. Each apprenticeship is unique and as such, the Progress Contacts can be tailored to suit the parties involved in the arrangement.

## Progress Contact – apprentice

At a minimum, the apprentice must be contacted using the regime specified in Tables 3 and 4 above, within 2 weeks either side of the prescribed Contact Point. Where Providers contact an apprentice, their employer is not required to be present or confirm the contact has occurred. However, if Providers are unable to contact the apprentice at a scheduled Progress Contact, they must contact the employer to seek assurance that the apprentice is undertaking the apprenticeship and on/off-the-job training as expected. In these circumstances, Providers must undertake the steps below:

### Step 1

- Make 3 attempts (using different channels) to contact the apprentice
  - if successful – enter details into ADMS (itemising attempts and noting conversation in the relevant Progress Contact commentary), for the relevant Contact Payment Point
  - if unsuccessful – go to **Step 2**

### Step 2

- Make 3 attempts to contact the employer (using different channels)
  - if successful – claim Contact Payment, but Providers must itemise attempts to contact apprentice, including dates, channel types, and whether each one was successful/unsuccessful, and subsequent attempts to contact the employer, including dates, channel types, and whether each one was successful/unsuccessful
  - if unsuccessful itemise attempts to contact apprentice including dates and channel types and whether each one was successful/unsuccessful; and itemise subsequent attempts to contact the employer including dates/channel types – **do not claim** Contact Payment.

Where an apprentice Progress Contact is due while a Mentoring and Personal Support Services placement is under way with that apprentice, the Provider may undertake the Progress Contact at the same time. Providers must still provide commentary in the relevant Progress Contact field in ADMS and claim their Contact Payment as per the standard process.

If at any time during their apprenticeship, an apprentice requests contact with the Provider, the contact must be dealt with within 2 Business Days. If a Provider is concerned about the apprentice's wellbeing, or the Provider considers the apprenticeship is at risk, the Provider must ensure that follow up contact is made with the apprentice within 24 hours of the first contact that raises the concern.

## Progress Contact – Employers Requiring Support

While there are no formal additional Progress Contacts with Employers Requiring Support, the department expects Providers will customise their service delivery to ensure Employers Requiring Support receive necessary support to improve apprenticeship retentions and completions. This support may go beyond what is contained in the standard contact requirements.

## Progress Contact—Topics for discussion

The aim of the Progress Contacts is to ensure the apprenticeship arrangement is progressing in line with the expectations of the apprentice and employer. At a minimum, but not limited to, the topics to be discussed during the contact include (refer Table 5):

Table 5 – Topics for discussion at an **Enhanced Services Apprentice Progress Contact**:

Topics for apprentices	Topics for employers
<p>Confirm details such as contact details, workplace address, etc.</p> <p>Confirm apprentice has set up a myGov account, if not, offer to assist them.</p> <p>Check if apprentice is having any issues accessing ADMS. If yes, offer to assist them.</p>	<p>Confirm details such as contact details, workplace address, legal entity and ABN, etc.</p> <p>Confirm employer has set up a myGov account, if not, offer to assist them.</p> <p>Check if employer is having any issues accessing ADMS. If yes, offer to assist them.</p>
<p>Determine if there are any issues with the training or employer, either on or off-the-job.</p> <p>Has the apprentice been experiencing any bullying or harassment?</p> <p>Any issues with being released for off-the-job training.</p>	<p>Determine if there are any issues with the apprentice’s performance or training progress.</p>
<p>Discuss any possible financial assistance that may be available/confirm continued involvement in TSL program/remind eligible apprentices to claim AATSP, NEASP (or AAIP support, if applicable).</p> <p>Confirm ability to manage claims processing, or any issues accessing ADMS.</p>	<p>Discuss any possible financial assistance that may be available/confirm processes related to existing eligibility under the Incentives System (or AAIP support, if applicable).</p> <p>Confirm ability to manage claims processing, or any issues accessing ADMS.</p>
<p>Remind eligible apprentices that they may be able to claim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ AATSP every 6 months for the first 2 years of their apprenticeship;</li> </ul> <p>NEASP at the 6, 12, 18 and 24-month mark, and on completion, if applicable.</p>	<p>Remind eligible employers to claim Priority Wage Subsidy, Hiring Incentive (or AAIP support, if applicable).</p> <p>Confirm ability to manage claims processing, or any issues accessing ADMS.</p>
<p>Discuss whether the apprentice is still undertaking the approved qualification as per the Training Contract</p> <p>For all apprentices in receipt of NEASP (that is, undertaking an apprenticeship with a Clean Energy Pathway), check that they are undertaking/continuing to undertake work relating to the Clean Energy Sector.</p>	<p>For all employers engaging an apprentice undertaking an apprenticeship with a Clean Energy Pathway, check that the apprentice is undertaking a significant proportion of their apprenticeship relating to the Clean Energy Sector.</p> <p>Discuss any long term/upcoming projects to ensure ongoing work on Clean Energy projects.</p>
<p>Raise eligibility for, and suitability for Mentoring and Personal Support Services. Refer to <i>Specialty Cohorts at section 1.8 of these Operating Guidelines</i> for specific servicing requirements for these cohorts.</p>	<p>Discuss employer eligibility and suitability for Mentoring and Personal Support Services and whether the employer requires this service.</p>

## **Progress Contact – general**

Where issues or concerns with an apprenticeship are raised that cannot be addressed through Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services, the Provider should refer the apprentice and/or employer to Mentoring and Personal Support Services, depending on availability, or external services as required (for example, the Fair Work Ombudsman).

Please note, Providers should manage their Mentoring and Personal Support Services caps carefully to ensure they are able to support those most at need across the year. The department may also, at any time at its discretion, increase a Provider's Mentoring and Personal Support Services cap. Where this does not occur, Providers should continue to support Australian Apprentices and employers as part of their provision of Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services.

## **Completion Contacts**

Providers must make a completion contact with the apprentice and employer. This must be undertaken on or within 4 weeks following their expected or actual completion date (whichever is first) with the goal of ensuring the apprenticeship is on track to complete and to assist with any outstanding issues or requirements.

Following the completion of the apprenticeship, the Provider must assist the apprentice and employer to fulfil any outstanding requirements and make any eligible claims. As with all contacts, the details of the completion contacts must be recorded in ADMS.

For the purpose of Progress Contacts, a GTO should be treated as a direct employer of apprentices. Where required, Provider obligations will be complete when they undertake the Progress Contact with the GTO.

## **Record keeping**

Providers must maintain a record of all of these contacts in ADMS, recording each contact on the apprenticeship record in the Consultations field. In order to receive Contact Payments, the contacts must be recorded, and the Consultation Type selected must be Progress Contacts.

## **Monitoring of Progress Contacts**

Providers must meet KPI 6 in relation to Progress Contacts. Compliance with this KPI will be monitored by the department.

## **2.4.7 Trade Support Loan Contacts**

The TSL application can be completed in ADMS by the apprentice once the Training Contract is in Ready for Review status in ADMS. Providers must notify apprentices when the TSL application is ready in ADMS and support the apprentice in accessing the system. Providers must contact apprentices who are in receipt of TSL (via their preferred method) 30 days before the last TSL payment is made in each 6-month period, to provide an opt-in form/or advise an opt-in application is available in ADMS, which the apprentice must complete should they want to continue to receive TSL (refer Table 6).

Table 6 – TSL Contact Regime

Contact Point/ Timeline	Service	Contact type
Processing Trade Support Loan Application	Sight or collect supporting evidence, assess application, and provide determination to applicant consistent with procedures and timeframes set out in TSL Guidelines, and the Operating Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADMS</li> <li>• face-to-face</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• telephone</li> <li>• SMS</li> <li>• mail</li> </ul>
Opt-in Process	Provide opt-in forms to apprentice and advise opt-in application is in ADMS for each subsequent 6-month period. Provide determination to applicant. Process form/schedule payments in accordance with timeframes set out in the TSL Guidelines, and the Operating Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADMS</li> <li>• face-to-face</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• telephone</li> <li>• SMS</li> <li>• mail</li> </ul>
Opt-out Process	On receipt of advice from apprentice, confirm Opt-out consistent with procedures set out in the TSL Guidelines, and the Operating Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADMS</li> <li>• face-to-face</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• telephone</li> <li>• SMS</li> <li>• mail</li> </ul>
Change of Circumstances advice	On receipt of advice from apprentice, confirm Change of Circumstances in accordance with procedures and timeframes set out in the TSL Guidelines, and the Operating Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• face-to-face</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• telephone</li> <li>• SMS</li> <li>• mail</li> </ul>

## 2.4.8 Technical Support

As part of the Fee for Service attached to Engagement and Technical Support Services, Providers must assist apprentice and employers to:

- access, navigate and promote use of ADMS
- obtain a myGovID and set-up their myGov account
- claim payments through ADMS
- register and report wages through STP for claim validation (employers only)
- provide advice to employers on recording details of the employer’s exemption to submission of STP, where required.

To support this, Providers must:

- enter data into ADMS in an accurate and timely manner
- use technology to target communications to apprentices and employers.

## 2.4.9 Program administration

*(Relates to Section 2.2.2.4 of the RFT)*

Providers must support apprentices and employers to access ADMS and claim entitlements under the Commonwealth Apprenticeship Incentives Programs (currently the Incentives System and AAIP), and other personal support programs such as the TSL program. The incentives and personal support programs that are likely to apply during the Deed Period may be subject to change.

Providers do not have primary responsibility for the processing of incentives claims – employers and apprentices can directly claim payments for which they are eligible through ADMS. However, Providers have a key role in providing advice on, and determining eligibility for the Commonwealth incentives and personal support programs. Providers will also support apprentices and employers to manage and process their claims (via ADMS).

Payment support includes assessing TSL and LAFHA applications, verifying claims on ADMS where the system cannot automatically verify the claim, and lodging claims on the employer/apprentice's behalf where they are unable to lodge their own claim in ADMS, for example, verifying evidence of employment.

Providers must undertake any claim support or verification actions relating to the Commonwealth Apprenticeship Programs in accordance with all requirements outlined in the Deed, and these Operating Guidelines within 10 working days from receipt of claim requiring verification. Where follow up action is required with the employer/apprentice, Providers must commence this action, making appropriate file notes, within 10 working days of receiving the claim and continue to follow up every 10 working days. Where delay is caused by system issues such as the time taken to update STA records in ADMS, Providers must follow up every 10 working days until the issues have been resolved.

More detail on claims processing and administration can be found in *section 3 AAIP and Incentives System Claim processing and administration*.

Under Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services, at sign-up, the Provider must ensure apprentices and employers can successfully access ADMS through their myGov or myGovID authentication and provide guidance on the claiming process, including supporting apprentices and employers to successfully submit their eligible claims.

For the duration of the apprenticeship, Providers are required to support apprentices/employers where they are unable to successfully claim through troubleshooting, and processing of special claims.

Providers must also support the administration of the TSL Program as delegates of the Secretary of the department under the *Trade Support Loans Act 2014*. As with other incentives and personal benefits, Providers will ensure apprentices can access ADMS to lodge TSL applications and other associated forms.

Providers must comply with all relevant program guidelines, including these Operating Guidelines, Incentives System and AAIP Guidelines, the *Trade Support Loans Act 2014*, TSL Rules, and TSL Program Guidelines.

### **Online web-based forms**

Claim information will be collected utilising e-lodgement. This information must be entered into ADMS to enable payments to be made.

#### **2.4.10 Provider responsiveness**

Providers are expected to be highly responsive to the needs of apprentices and their employers. In practice, this means ensuring that enquiries are handled promptly, accurately, and effectively, and Providers proactively seek to resolve issues that arise during the apprenticeship.

## 3 AAIP AND INCENTIVES SYSTEM CLAIM PROCESSING AND ADMINISTRATION

*(Relates to section 2.2.2.4 of the RFT)*

### 3.1 Payments to employers and apprentices – AAIP and Incentives System

#### 3.1.1 Overview

Providers are required to administer the AAIP and Incentives System in line with these Operating Guidelines, the Deed and the AAIP/Incentives System Guidelines.

These programs provide financial support to eligible apprentices and their employers.

#### 3.1.2 Changes to AAIP/Incentives System

Payments under these programs may be introduced, modified or discontinued over the course of the Deed. Providers will administer all payments or system requirements according to government policy at any point during the Deed Period as part of servicing requirements. The AAIP closed to new apprentices/apprenticeships on 30 June 2022 and was replaced by the Incentives System from 1 July 2022.

#### 3.1.3 Assessing eligibility

While ADMS will assist with the assessment of AAIP/Incentives System payment eligibility based on certain system criteria and information entered on the claim forms, Providers will be required to assess all aspects to ensure eligibility and they must do so by cross-referencing the current program guidelines to ensure accurate assessment.

Where eligibility for particular payments, such as LAFHA, NEASP etc. cannot entirely be completed automatically, Providers will complete the assessment manually.

Once eligibility has been confirmed, Providers will issue a formal eligibility advice letter to the employer and apprentice. This must include a schedule of eligible payments so it is clear when they will need to claim.

#### 3.1.4 Making payments to employers and apprentices

ADMS will allow claims to be paid once the due date has fallen. Claim forms must be completed and authorised by relevant parties. When claim details have been entered in ADMS, the payment will be processed.

Where applicable, Providers must review and approve these payments for adherence to these Operating Guidelines and the AAIP/Incentives System guidelines before approving and submitting the claims for payment.

#### 3.1.5 Claim Forms

E-lodgement must be used for claim forms. For non-wage subsidy incentive claims, claimants have 12 months from the effect date to lodge a claim, except for the AATSP and the NEASP which must be lodged within 3 months of the claim effect date. Where co-authorisation is required, if the electronic claim form has not been co-authorised 12 months from the effect date, the claimant can be given an additional one month to provide alternative evidence to support the claim.

Where a claim is unable to be processed in ADMS, upon receipt of a fully completed claim form Providers must process this claim via the manual claim functionality in ADMS.

### 3.1.6 Processing AAIP/Incentives System Claims – Procedural Requirements

The administration of payments under the AAIP/Incentives System is reliant on parties completing and authorising the relevant Australian Government application and claim forms.

Providers must use due skill, care and diligence in all steps involved in processing AAIP/Incentives System claims.

Each apprentice and employer must have entered into a formal STA approved Training Contract to be eligible for payments under the AAIP/Incentives System.

Providers must undertake signature and email verification protocols to ensure the validity, accuracy and completeness of information provided. If, in undertaking the verification protocols, they doubt the veracity of the information provided on ADMS or in the claim form, they must verify the details with the employer, and/or apprentice, and/or RTO.

Where Providers suspect that inaccurate or incomplete information has been provided deliberately in order to falsely claim, they must immediately report the matter to their Contract Manager

### 3.1.7 Processing Incentives System Claims via ADMS

Distribution of Incentives System claim applications will be automated through ADMS, with employers responsible for submitting their own claim applications.

Providers will deliver the following services to assist employers and the department with the claims:

- managing eligibility
  - investigating why employers have not received a claim application (if applicable)
  - investigating and updating where information contained in the claim application is incorrect
  - responding to general apprenticeship incentive enquiries
- managing training evidence
  - formalising apprentice training arrangements
  - providing copies of documentation
- maintaining the employer record
  - change of circumstances (business name, address, ABN, contact information etc.)
  - change of ownership
  - change of employer
  - bank accounts
- assisting employers to complete the claim application, including providing advice on how to use ADMS and obtain myGovID
- assisting where a claim has been paid to the employer, but the employer is entitled to a top up as a result of a claiming error
- creating a manual claim form in ADMS where a claim has not been generated automatically and should have been.

Where ADMS is unable to process a payment automatically, a person authorised by the Provider to lodge a claim must do so manually in ADMS.

### 3.1.8 Processing AAIP/Incentives System Claims – Name of employer and ABN

Providers must take reasonable steps to verify that an Australian Business Number (ABN) provided by an employer is the current ABN of the employer's legal entity.

## Name of Employer

The employer must be a Legal entity, which includes:

- an individual (e.g., Mr John Smith)
- a company (e.g., Great Services Pty Ltd)
- the trustee of a trust (e.g., Example Pty Ltd as trustee for the Example Trust)
- partner(s) of a partnership (e.g., Ms Jill Smith and Ms Jane Smith of Smith & Smith partnership, or the convention required by the relevant STA)
- an incorporated association (e.g., Association Inc.)
- a member of an unincorporated association (e.g., Mr Adam Member on behalf of Club A)
- an authority established as a body corporate by legislation (e.g., Australian National University).

A trading name, a business name, an unincorporated association, a partnership name or a trust name are not legal entities.

## ABN of Employer

The ABN provided must be the relevant ABN of the employer. This will normally be the ABN of the person, company or incorporated association.

The use of an ABN has tax consequences but does not affect the legal obligations of the entity under the Training Contract or its entitlement to receive AAIP/Incentives System payments.

### 3.1.9 Collection of Tax File Numbers

The Additional Identified Skills Shortage (AISS) payment, the AATSP, and the NEASP which are made to apprentices, are considered taxable payments. The payments are received in connection with an apprentice's income earning activity, so it is appropriate they are included as part of the apprentice's taxable income.

It is lawful for the department, through its contracted Providers, to collect Tax File Numbers (TFNs) from apprentices for the purpose of the department withholding a portion of the apprentice's AISS, AATSP, and/or NEASP for taxation purposes.

At the commencement of a payer and payee relationship, a **TFN declaration** is required to be completed by the payee. For taxation purposes, **the department is the payer, and the apprentice is the payee.**

If the payee does not provide a TFN declaration, the payer will have to withhold at the highest marginal tax rate from the payments it makes to the payee, unless the payee claims an exemption from quoting a TFN.

The *Privacy (Tax File Number) Rule 2015* sets out steps for an agency or organisation to consider taking to protect the privacy of TFN information, and ensure they comply with the binding [Privacy \(Tax File Number\) Rule 2015](#) issued under section 17 of the [Privacy Act 1988](#).

A paper copy of the signed TFN declaration or electronic files of scanned forms must be securely stored for business records. Scanned forms must be clear and not altered or de-identified in any way. This varies from TFN collection for TSL.

Providers should refer to the TFN Handling Strategy for detailed information on the collection of TFNs.

### 3.1.10 Claimant unable to validate payment

All incentives claims lodged in ADMS require evidence that the apprentice was employed at the effect date of the claim. ADMS will attempt to verify this using ATO STP data. Where this is not possible the Provider must verify proof of employment, which may be in the form of:

- a payroll print, time and wages sheet, payslip or a separation certificate
- a Statutory Declaration – signed by the employer or apprentice (as the case warrants) to confirm the apprentice was employed by the employer as an apprentice at the effect date, or for the duration of the claim period.

A letter from an employer or apprentice is not sufficient as it provides no additional evidence. The evidence needs to provide reasonable assurance that the apprenticeship was in place at the relevant effect date or for the duration of the claim period.

### 3.1.11 Agent or Contractor acting for Employer

Some employers engage an agent or contractor (third party), also referred to as a 'broker,' to carry out human resource functions including the administration of apprenticeships. The broker acts on behalf of the employer for the administration of the AAIP and/or Incentives System.

Employers that use a third party, and their apprentices, must authorise the release of their information to the third party by the relevant Provider.

The provision of this authority does not affect payments made under the AAIP and/or Incentives System. The department will only make payments under the AAIP and/or Incentives System to the employer and not to a third party.

This authority must be provided by the parties to Providers on the *Authority for a Provider to Release Australian Apprenticeship Information* form (Form 1295) and maintained on the relevant apprenticeship file. The form is intended for genuine providers of human resources functions or services only. Providers should contact their Contract Manager if they have any concerns in this regard.

If the recommending employer is also using a broker, then a new Form 1295 for each apprentice is necessary, as the parties sharing the information would have changed.

The Form 1295 is available from the Provider's Contract Manager

### 3.1.12 Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements and Completing Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidies

The BAC and CAC wage subsidies aimed to support employers to engage new apprentices and trainees and retain them to build a pipeline of skilled workers to support sustained economic recovery. Key dates for BAC and CAC are as follows:

- eligibility for BAC and CAC closed 30 June 2022
- final BAC claims for payment closed 31 December 2023
- final CAC claims for payment close 31 December 2025.

The BAC and CAC are administered in line with these Operating Guidelines, the Deed and the AAIP Guidelines as outlined above.

Importantly, Providers are responsible for any ongoing need to determine an employer's eligibility for the BAC and CAC wage subsidies and ensuring the information recorded in ADMS is correct and up to date; reflects their current eligibility status; and enables them to access and submit claims in ADMS and receive payment/s to a nominated bank account. Eligibility criteria is set out in the AAIP Guidelines.

Where an employer or apprentice reports, or Providers become aware of, a change in circumstances that affects eligibility for the BAC and CAC wage subsidies, they must ensure this information is recorded in ADMS.

Claims for the BAC and CAC wage subsidies are automated through ADMS, with employers responsible for submitting their own claim applications.

However, as distinct from the AAIP/Incentives System claiming, where ADMS is unable to verify the information provided by the employer in the claim application automatically, the claim will be work-flowed to Services Australia for manual verification.

### Claim periods and time limits

Refer Parts F.2.4(a) and F.3.4(a) of the AAIP Guidelines.

## 3.1.13 New Energy Apprentice Support Payment assessment/eligibility/ spot checks

### Description

ADMS will make an initial eligibility determination for the NEASP based on the information input by the Provider at the sign-up. ADMS will assess eligibility based on whether or not the Qualification and Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) codes are on the Priority List AND identified as being in New/Clean Energy.

If ADMS determines the apprenticeship to be potentially NEASP eligible, the Provider must finalise the eligibility assessment by ensuring that the employer's:

- business engagement and operation sits within the Clean Energy Sector; and
- business activities are principally motivated by the production of renewable energy, and/or by the design, construction and/or operation and maintenance of renewable energy infrastructure.

*The Australian Renewable Energy Agency provides additional guidance and information which may be helpful: [What is renewable energy?— Australian Renewable Energy Agency \(ARENA\)](#)*

The following questions will assist the Provider to determine eligibility:

- Has the employer clearly articulated the role of the apprentice?
- Does the role of the apprentice described by the employer meet the definition of Clean Energy activity?
- Does the employer's business have much experience in the relevant sector?
- Is the employer's engagement with the Clean Energy Sector ongoing, and consists of a significant proportion of the apprentice's work tasks?
- Has the employer demonstrated a thorough understanding of the Clean Energy Sector?
- Is there any work the apprentice must undertake as part of their role that necessitates working outside of Clean Energy? If so, roughly how long?

If the employer has a project identified and believes in good faith that this work will commence and will continue, then ultimately it is for the Provider to determine if it is reasonable based on the other eligibility criteria.

The employer must demonstrate that the apprentice will be provided with a significant proportion of their work in the Clean Energy Sector, on an ongoing basis and at commencement or recommencement.

This means the apprentice will need to be exclusively working on Clean Energy related activities, except when undertaking other training or work activities required to attain core competencies as part of their mandatory training.

Where the Provider is not able to make a determination as to whether an apprentice is eligible for the NEASP, they must contact their Contract Manager for advice.

Where the apprenticeship has a Clean Energy Pathway, a declaration must be received from the employer and the apprentice and documented by the Provider in ADMS. The declaration asks:

- the employer to reaffirm their commitment to:
  - undertake work in a Clean Energy Sector
  - provide the apprentice with a significant proportion of their work in the Clean Energy Sector on an ongoing basis and at commencement or recommencement
  - provide the apprentice with ongoing on-the-job training in Clean Energy work and/or project(s)
- the apprentice to reaffirm their commitment to:
  - build skills in a Clean Energy occupation, including selecting Clean Energy electives in their training, where available and appropriate.

The Provider must enter relevant information about the apprenticeship in ADMS, including their initial assessment of NEASP eligibility. In addition to the Training Contract components, the following fields which will determine NEASP eligibility, must be completed:

- New Energy Activity – must be populated with a comprehensive description of work to be undertaken throughout the apprenticeship that demonstrates that the apprenticeship has a Clean Energy Pathway and is aligned to the Policy Intent – that is: *Employment that undertakes activities principally motivated by the production of renewable energy, and/or by the design, construction and/or operation and maintenance of renewable energy infrastructure*
- New Energy Project Name – this will help support that the Activity relates to renewable energy
- New Energy Sector – this will help support that the Activity relates to renewable energy.

#### Overriding eligibility determination

The Provider has the ability to override the ADMS eligibility determination to ‘not eligible’ if the New Energy Activity, or other information gained by the Provider does not demonstrate a Clean Energy Pathway, despite the Qualification and ANZSCO codes being included on the New/Clean Energy subset of the Priority List. All overrides must be fully explained/justified in the Override Comments field in ADMS.

#### Spot checks

*(Relates to Section 2.2.2.6 of the RFT)*

The Provider must undertake in person on-site workplace spot checks with the employer and the apprentice where the apprenticeship has a Clean Energy Pathway (refer definition in the Incentives System Guidelines, and these Operating Guidelines). These spot checks must occur at least twice during the term of the apprenticeship and are to confirm work undertaken by the apprentice is consistent with the Clean Energy Sector definition in the Incentives System Guidelines, and these Operating Guidelines. These visits will be included as part of the Progress Contact regime, and the Provider must record the spot check as a Clean Energy contact, separately in ADMS. Commentary must include the work being undertaken by the apprentice and whether there are any causes for concern in relation to the work being undertaken – that is, whether it is Clean Energy compliant, or not. The Provider will be required to report back to the department in relation to each non-compliant employer on the departmentally approved template (refer Operating Guideline Attachments).

Where the apprentice was originally assessed as eligible for NEASP, but the Provider is subsequently notified that the Clean Energy activity has since ceased, the Provider must immediately override the decision from ‘eligible’ to ‘ineligible’ in ADMS from the date the Clean Energy activity ceased and

reassess the apprentice for the AATSP. Where the apprentice ceased undertaking eligible activities prior to the effect date of an earlier claim, and therefore received payment when not entitled, an NEASP overpayment may be raised against the apprentice for that period. Once the Provider has overridden NEASP eligibility in ADMS and reassesses/overrides AATSP eligibility to 'eligible', the apprentice will no longer be sent NEASP claim forms – they will start to receive AATSP claim forms.

Providers must advise employers of their obligation to make themselves, their apprentice and their worksite available to Providers to undertake spot checks, at a time suitable to all parties. This advice must be given to the employers at the sign-up and included in their eligibility advice letters.

### 3.1.14 Trade Support Loans processing and administration

#### Overview

TSL provides financial support to eligible apprentices to assist them with the costs of living and study while undertaking an apprenticeship. TSL aims to increase completion rates and meet the Australian Government's commitment to deliver improved productivity and competitiveness to the Australian economy by providing highly skilled individuals in occupations in skills shortage.

Providers are required to administer the TSL Program in line with these Operating Guidelines, their Deed and the TSL Program Guidelines and legislation. The program aims to increase completion rates among apprentices in priority areas, by providing financial support through a concessional income contingent loan to eligible apprentices to assist them with the costs of living and learning while undertaking an apprenticeship.

#### Changes to TSL

TSL may be modified over the course of the Deed. Providers will administer all payments or system requirements according to government policy at any point during the Deed Period as part of servicing requirements.

#### Application

Apprentices will need to log into ADMS to apply for a TSL.

Providers must notify apprentices when their TSL application is ready in ADMS, and apprentices must complete and submit their TSL application in ADMS. Submitted applications will come to Providers for assessment, where they must review the application and supporting evidence. If Providers are not satisfied with the authenticity of attached evidence, they may request certified copies be provided, by returning the application to the apprentice via ADMS.

Upon approval of a TSL application, Providers must process the payment in ADMS.

Where an apprentice is unable to access ADMS, Providers may provide them with a paper version of the TSL application form, electronically (that is, as an attachment to an email) or by mail.

Apprentices:

- must sign the TSL application form as indicated on the form
- may submit the TSL application form by mail, email or in person. Providers must sight residency evidence if the application form is submitted in person, or a copy of residency evidence must be included with the application form if submitted by mail or email. If Providers are not satisfied with the authenticity of residency evidence, they may request certified copies be provided
- must not use stickers, pencil or correction fluid on forms, however, ink stamps are acceptable, except in the date and signature fields – Providers may use highlighting to indicate which fields on the forms the apprentice needs to complete, but must not pre-fill the TSL application form.

Upon receipt of a fully completed application form, Providers must process the payment in ADMS, then scan and upload the fully completed application form to support this manual processing of the application form.

Where an ADMS TSL application or the paper-based form is incomplete, Providers must notify the apprentice and seek further information. Where the form is incomplete or incorrect and Providers do not receive updated or corrected details within 13 weeks after the day the application was submitted, the application will be refused. Where the apprentice provides sufficient information to complete the application, the date on which the apprentice submitted the application, or Providers first received the application form is the application date.

### **Opt-in Application**

Apprentices will need to log into ADMS to complete an opt-in application for a TSL.

Upon receipt of a fully completed ADMS opt-in application, Providers must assess and process the payment in ADMS.

Where apprentices are unable to submit opt-in applications electronically, Providers must provide them with a paper version of the TSL opt-in application electronically (that is, as an attachment to an email) or by mail.

Apprentices:

- must sign the paper-based opt-in application as indicated and must initial all required boxes
- may submit the paper version TSL opt-in application by mail, in person or email
- must not use stickers, pencil or correction fluid on forms, however, ink stamps are acceptable, except in the date and signature fields – Providers may use highlighting to indicate which fields on the application the apprentice needs to complete, but must not pre-fill the TSL opt-in application

Upon receipt of a fully completed paper-based opt-in application, Providers must assess and process the payment in ADMS, then scan and upload the fully completed opt-in application to support this manual processing of a claim.

Where an ADMS opt-in application has been submitted or paper version is incomplete, Providers must notify the apprentice and seek further information. Where the application is incomplete or incorrect and Providers do not receive updated or corrected details within 13 weeks after the day the opt-in application was lodged, the opt-in will be refused. Where the apprentice provides sufficient information to complete the application, the date on which the apprentice submitted the application, or Providers first received the paper-based opt-in application is the opt-in date.

### **Assessing eligibility**

Providers must undertake the assessment of TSL applications. ADMS will assist in the assessment of TSL payment eligibility based on certain system criteria and information entered on the applications. Providers may need to assess certain aspects to ensure eligibility and they must do so by cross-referencing the current TSL Program Guidelines to ensure accurate assessment.

Where eligibility cannot be totally assessed automatically, Providers will complete the assessment manually.

### **Making payments to apprentices**

ADMS will allow payment to the apprentice once the due date has fallen. The apprentice must have completed and submitted a TSL application or opt-in application. When Providers have entered details in ADMS, the payment is processed.

## Processing TSL applications – Procedural Requirements

The administration of TSL is reliant on the apprentice completing and submitting the relevant Australian Government applications. Providers must use due skill, care and diligence in all steps involved in processing TSL payments.

Each apprentice must be undertaking a qualifying apprenticeship to be eligible for TSL.

Where an apprentice has provided a paper version of the TSL application Providers must undertake signature verification protocols to ensure the validity, accuracy and completeness of information provided in an apprentice's Training Contract. If, in undertaking the verification protocols, Providers doubt the veracity of the information provided on ADMS or in the application or opt-in, they must verify the details with the apprentice and/or their parent/guardian where they are a minor.

Where Providers suspect that inaccurate or incomplete information has been provided deliberately in order to falsely apply for a TSL, they must immediately report the matter to their Contract Manager.

## Processing TSL applications – Procedural Requirements for under 18-year-old apprentices

Where the apprentice is aged under the age of 18 years, Providers must provide additional information at sign-up to the apprentice and their parent or guardian. The apprentice is still eligible to receive a TSL without acknowledgement from their parent or guardian, although the apprentice will need to provide a reason where a parent/guardian acknowledgment was not obtained.

Providers must contact the apprentice and return the application if a reason is not provided.

Where an apprentice does not have a parent/guardian acknowledgment Providers must discuss with the apprentice the obligations under the *Trade Support Loans Act 2014* outlined in the TSL application. Providers should place particular emphasis on ensuring the apprentice is aware of their obligation to notify of any change of circumstance.

## Collection of Tax File Numbers (TFN) for TSL

In order to receive TSL, an apprentice must provide their TFN. TFNs must be collected using the TSL application or change of circumstance form and must not be collected under any other circumstances. An apprentice will provide their TFN when completing their TSL application in ADMS. If a TFN is not verified, Providers must contact the apprentice to confirm the TFN and return their TSL application in ADMS to re-enter. Where a TFN is provided on a paper-based application Providers must enter them accurately into ADMS for verification. If the apprentice confirms that the TFN provided is correct on a paper-based application, Providers must re-enter the TFN into ADMS.

**Note:** TFNs must not be provided or confirmed over the phone.

It is not an offence not to provide a TFN, however, if the TFN is not provided or verified with the ATO, the apprentice will not be able to receive TSL.

The *Privacy (Tax File Number) Rule 2015* sets out steps for an agency or organisation to consider taking to protect the privacy of TFN information, and ensure they comply with the [Privacy \(Tax File Number\) Rule 2015](#) issued under section 17 of the [Privacy Act 1988](#)

Providers must:

- protect TFN information from misuse and loss, and from unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure – where a TSL paper-based application includes a TFN, Providers are required to de-identify the TFN on the application after it is entered into ADMS to ensure it is no longer visible – methods of de-identification may include using a texta, marker, biro or a black out stamp – black out stamps are designed specifically for de-identifying confidential information

- ensure that access to records containing TFN information is restricted to individuals who need to handle that information for taxation law, personal assistance law or superannuation law purposes
- after receiving the TFN, the ATO will assess whether the TFN provided is correct for the apprentice – if it is incorrect, it will show as unverified in ADMS and Providers will receive notification – if the ATO determines that the TFN is incorrect, Providers will be notified, and they should then follow the requirements of the *TSL TFN verification handling strategy*.

### Commonwealth Contract Officer

The Secretary of the department has delegated a number of powers under the *Trade Support Loans Act 2014*, to Providers. For the purpose of the TSL delegations, delegates and review officers will be referred to as Commonwealth Contract Officers.

The department will utilise ADMS to maintain a register of employees and contractors who will be performing functions or exercising powers in this capacity.

### Trade Support Loans – review and escalation process

An apprentice has the right to have any decision under the TSL Program reviewed. These are either reviewable Secretary decisions or reviewable Commissioner decisions.

Providers are only responsible for reviewing decisions on TSLs that they have made under the *Trade Support Loans Act 2014* (the Act), Rules and Guidelines.

These are described as reviewable Secretary decisions in the Guidelines and Act.

The ATO is responsible for reviewable Commissioner decisions.

### Reviewable Secretary decisions

Reviewable Secretary decisions are detailed in the TSL Program Guidelines. The following positions are authorised to make reviewable Secretary decisions:

- the Provider's employee occupying the position of Commonwealth Contract Officer
- selected departmental staff.

Providers will be responsible for ensuring the currency of their Commonwealth Contract Officers.

Providers are responsible for reviewing TSL decisions they have made on:

- eligibility (qualification and payability)
- the period for which an apprentice will receive payment
- the number of instalments they will receive
- the yearly rate which will apply
- the instalment rate
- cancellation of loans
- calculation of the completion discount.

The department may also review a reviewable decision, even if it was not requested by the claimant (such as where an administrative error is identified).

### Reviewable Commissioner decisions

Where an apprentice wishes to appeal matters in relation to their taxation, repayments of TSL through the taxation system, or the application of their completion discount, Providers will refer them to the ATO.

Decisions regarding taxation are reviewable Commissioner decisions under sections 50 or 51 of the *Trade Support Loans Act 2014*.

### Provider Review

The apprentice must lodge a written request for a review of a decision within 28 days of receiving notice of the decision.

Where the request for review is a reviewable Secretary decision, Providers should re-examine the decision based on the TSL Program Guidelines, the Act, the Rules and Priority List considering the reasons that the claimant has put forward for the review of the decision as well as any additional information provided.

A person senior to the original decision maker must undertake the review for the Provider. The review should be conducted within a reasonable amount of time. If the reviewer does not provide an outcome to the apprentice within 45 days after receiving the review application, the original decision will be upheld, and the apprentice may then request a further review of the decision which is undertaken by the department.

Once the review has been undertaken Providers will notify the person of the outcome including:

- the reason for the decision
- any further action that will be taken (such as, correcting errors in decisions)
- where the original decision has been upheld, Providers will outline the options the apprentice has for escalating the review.

An apprentice may withdraw an application for review at any time either orally or in writing. Where the withdrawal is made orally, Providers will confirm the withdrawal in writing with the apprentice.

If the apprentice is not satisfied with the outcome of the review, they can request a further review of the decision which is then undertaken by the department.

### Escalations and exceptional circumstance/reasonable excuse claims

Where the Provider upholds the original decision or where the claimant has put forward *reasonable excuse or exceptional circumstance* (see section 2.5 of the TSL Program Guidelines) as the basis for the review, the department will review the claim.

Providers must forward the evidence provided by the claimant and all relevant documentation to their Contract Manager.

Providers are to make a recommendation in respect of each request for review sent to their Contract Manager and, where appropriate, add additional relevant information.

The department will review the decisions, considering the policies and intent of the Program. The department has an overarching obligation to ensure that the policy intent of the Program is achieved in line with the legislation and rules.

The department will notify the claimant of the outcome of the reviewed decision in writing, as quickly as possible after an assessment is complete, and a decision made.

If unsuccessful, this notification will provide a clear and concise explanation of the reason(s) that the request for review was unsuccessful, outlining the intent of the policy and referring to the guidelines. This notification will also include the information regarding the apprentice's appeal rights through the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

## 4 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

*(Relates to section 2.6.3 of the RFT)*

### 4.1 Overview

The Performance Management Framework (Performance Framework) will be a key mechanism to evaluate the provision of services and outcomes of Support Services delivered by Providers.

Providers must demonstrate satisfactory ongoing effectiveness in the delivery of Support Services. The department will measure this performance through a number of performance measures, which will be assessed on a regular basis. This may include a competition framework to rank Providers in terms of effectiveness of service delivery.

The Performance Framework is in place to:

- ensure that the program is meeting policy objectives and Australian Government commitments
- build a productive and ongoing business relationship with Providers to deliver quality Support Services to apprentices, employers and stakeholders
- ensure that Providers are meeting their obligations under the Deed, and performance requirements
- identify performance trends, and policy and program issues early
- develop remedial management plans to assist Providers to achieve performance standards
- protect Commonwealth funds and ensure that they are used effectively
- where implemented, assess the comparative value offered by Providers through a competition framework, a holistic measure of requirements under the Deed, including performance and relationship with the department.

### 4.2 Objectives

The Performance Management Framework aims to:

- actively monitor the Provider's performance and service quality
- identify and promptly address any underperformance
- drive continuous improvement and identification of leading practice
- examine and assess the relevance and effectiveness of service streams, tools and methodologies
- ensure high standards of excellence in the administration of Australian Government funding
- ensure value for money from Australian Government investment in Support Services.

### 4.3 Northern Territory Performance Management

The department and the Northern Territory Government's Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade, have joint Deed arrangements with the Northern Territory Provider.

For the Northern Territory Provider, this section (Performance Management) of the Operating Guidelines is replaced by the Northern Territory Performance Management Guidelines. This is the only section that is replaced, and all other sections of these Operating Guidelines apply to the Northern Territory Provider.

## 4.4 Key Performance Indicators

The KPIs in the Deed (and replicated below) measure the delivery of Support Services, including measuring Provider performance against benchmarks and service quality.

KPIs form the basis for measuring Provider performance in conjunction with other terms and conditions in the Deed, and these Operating Guidelines. Providers will deliver Support Services in a manner that achieves the program’s policy goals and delivers optimum performance when measured against the KPIs.

Performance in delivering Support Services will be measured through 11 KPIs across all Support Services under the Deed. This includes both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Table 7 – Summary of Key Performance Indicators

	Area for review/KPI	Description
	<b>Assessment Services</b>	
<b>KPI 1</b>	Assessment Services – individualised support	Provider’s delivery of Assessment Services meets requirements in the Deed, and Program Guidelines (including comparison to national best practice)  <b>Quarterly</b> qualitative review of a sample of Assessment Services records
	<b>Mentoring and Personal Support Services</b>	
<b>KPI 2</b>	Tailored Support Plans (TSPs)	Provider’s delivery of Mentoring and Personal Support Services meets requirements in the Deed, and Program Guidelines (including comparison to national best practice)  <b>Quarterly</b> qualitative review of a sample of TSP records
<b>KPI 3</b>	Mentoring and Personal Support Services Report	Provider’s delivery of Mentoring and Personal Support Services meets the requirements of the Deed, and Program Guidelines (including comparison to national best practice)  <b>Quarterly</b> submission of a completed Mentoring and Personal Support Services Report in the template provided by the department (qualitative review)
	<b>Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services</b>	
<b>KPI 4</b>	Apprenticeship Retention and Completion rates – non-Key Client Group apprentices	Provider Retention and Completion rates meet or exceed Benchmarks in the Deed, including reaching increased target benchmarks <i>(This includes benchmarks with reporting cancellations and withdrawals)</i>  <b>6-monthly</b> quantitative review of Provider results
<b>KPI 5</b>	Apprenticeship Commencement, Retention and Completion rates – Key Client Groups	Commencement, Retention and Completion rates for Key Client Groups meet or exceed Benchmarks in the Deed, including reaching increased target benchmarks <i>(This includes benchmarks with reporting cancellations and withdrawals)</i>  <b>6-monthly</b> quantitative review of Provider results
<b>KPI 6</b>	Progress Contacts – Enhanced Services apprentices	Provider’s delivery of Progress Contacts and reporting meets requirements in the Deed and Program Guidelines  <b>Quarterly</b> qualitative review of a sample of Progress Contact records

Area for review/KPI		Description
<b>KPI 7</b>	Provider services and AAIP/ Incentives System administrative monitoring 'File monitoring'	Performance against essential administrative requirements in the Deed, Commonwealth Apprenticeship Incentives Programs Guidelines, and Program Guidelines <b>6-monthly</b> desktop review of a sample of Commonwealth Apprenticeship Incentives Programs data and apprenticeship files
<b>KPI 8</b>	TSL administrative monitoring 'File monitoring'	Performance against essential administrative requirements in the Deed, and TSL Program including legislation <b>6-monthly</b> desktop review of a sample of TSL data and apprenticeship files
<b>KPI 9</b>	Environment and Activity Report	Provider's delivery of Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services meets the requirements of the Deed, and Program Guidelines <b>6-monthly</b> submission of a completed Environment and Activity Report in the template provided by the department (qualitative review)
<b>KPI 10</b>	Provider engagement and feedback	Department assessment of Provider service delivery and engagement in line with the Deed and Program Guidelines <b>6-monthly</b> qualitative review and assessment of Provider engagement covering complaints handling, relationship management and stakeholder feedback
<b>KPI 11</b>	School engagement	Department review of Provider School coverage and engagement, as set out in the School Engagement Plan – <i>refer to section 2.4.3 Marketing (Marketing and Promotion) in these Operating Guidelines</i> <b>6-monthly</b> quantitative and qualitative review of School attendance and engagement records

#### 4.4.1 Changes to the KPI monitoring regime

The department reserves the right, in consultation with Providers, to change the monitoring regime, KPIs and the measurement of performance.

#### 4.4.2 Other performance management and fraud detection measures

The department will undertake monitoring of Support Services throughout the Deed. Some of the areas that may be targeted as part of this monitoring are outlined below:

- **Direct surveying** – the department may undertake direct surveying (including phone calls) of apprentices and employers to provide assurance of service undertakings and quality at any stage during the Deed Period.
- **Fraud detection and data integrity** – the department will perform other fraud detection and data integrity checks on a regular or ad-hoc basis to ensure:
  - Commonwealth funds are used appropriately
  - compliance with regulatory and legislative frameworks
  - collection of high quality data to facilitate program management, reporting and analysis

Fraud detection and data integrity checks undertaken may include, but are not limited to:

- identifying and investigating employers with unusually high turnover of apprentices or early completions
- bank account activity
- employer validation (ABN) checks.

- **Exception Reporting** – other exception reporting may be undertaken if new risks are identified during the Deed Period. If the department identifies ongoing or systematic issues, exception reporting may become part of the regular KPI Performance Management Framework monitoring.

Providers must work with the department to investigate issues or unexplained findings identified in the exception reports or as a result of the department’s internal investigations and reviews.

#### 4.4.3 Performance Indicators

Provider performance may also be measured through Performance Indicators that will be used to provide insight into Provider performance, help explain KPI results, and may indicate performance concerns. Performance Indicators results are intended to raise issues for discussion, and potential actions to improve performance, during regular Provider performance discussions.

Performance Indicators reviewed may include, but are not limited to:

- proportion of assessments conducted pre- or post- commencement, or on the day of sign-up
- proportion of Progress Contact visits conducted within the allowable 4-week contact window
- retention and completion rates for apprentices who took up mentoring services
- commencement, retention and completion rates broken down by trade and non-trade apprenticeships
- proportion of schools visited in reference years also visited in the previous year.

The department will provide detailed information on Performance Indicators prior to the commencement of the Deed.

#### 4.4.4 Competition Framework

The department may implement a competition framework to evaluate and compare the value provided by Providers through rating and ranking performance against specific qualitative and quantitative measures. The framework seeks to provide a holistic assessment of the comparative ‘value’ offered by Providers within their Service Region(s) and to the department overall.

Insights gained through application of the competition framework may seek to inform decisions about future work allocations for Providers. The competition framework will also seek to provide an evaluation of value for money.

**The department will provide detailed information on any competition framework to be implemented prior to the commencement of the Deed.**

#### 4.4.5 Public Reporting

##### Public Reporting on Performance

The department may report the Provider’s performance in each Service Region(s) in a format that provides useful and readily understood information to employers, apprentices and other interested parties.

The information published will indicate the Provider’s achievement against the benchmark(s) for the reporting period and may include competition framework rankings and/or individual KPI results.

## 4.5 Deed Governance

The department will, at a time determined by the department, request documents required under the Deed from Providers to ensure they are compliant with Deed governance, for example:

- all plans are completed and submitted to the department
- Providers are compliant and up to date with all National Standards and requirements, such as Indigenous Participation, Working with Children, Workplace Gender Equity, and Insurances (Worker's Compensation, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity)
- make available the Provider Code of Conduct
- breach detection, investigation, remedying, mitigation and reporting relating to code of conduct, fraud, security, privacy and eligible data breaches – including management of files
- complaints handling, timeliness of resolution, and transparency
- site compliance (approved signage, and access by persons with disabilities)
- promotional/marketing strategies
- personnel and subcontractor compliance with required licences, permits, registrations, and relevant security clearances
- pre-approval for subcontractor engagement
- detection and management of conflict of interest
- compliance with relevant laws and Commonwealth policies, for example, the Modern Slavery Act.

## 4.6 Complaints handling

Apprentices, employers and/or any other interested parties, may lodge a complaint, query or provide feedback on any aspect of an apprenticeship. Providers must action complaints regardless of their source.

Matters raised could include, but are not limited to:

- breaches of the Provider Code of Conduct
- issues regarding the quality of Support Services provided by Providers
- issues regarding conflicts of interest
- service delivery issues
- eligibility for payments.

Providers must ensure that they advise employers, apprentices and other interested persons on the operation and procedures of the complaints process.

### 4.6.1 Complaints Escalation Process

In the first instance, Providers should use their own free, easily accessible complaints resolution process to investigate and resolve complaints. This may involve liaison with the Provider's Contract Manager for advice and assistance.

Providers must:

- document the action taken to resolve the complaint on a Complaints Register
- send a copy of their completed Complaints Register by email to the department (*as per KPI 10 in section 4 of these Operating Guidelines*) and as requested by the department
- ensure that they follow up the complaint within 10 working days of the complaint being lodged with them.

In the event that Providers cannot resolve the complaint, they must refer apprentices, employers and others, to the department's National Customer Service Line (1800 020 108) to escalate their complaint. The department will provide information, investigate the concerns of callers and take action to resolve them.

For complaints referred to Providers by the department, their Contract Manager will require a written response (usually by email) once the Provider has fully investigated and resolved the complaint.

Providers must also assist employers and apprentices with other types of complaints by providing accurate referral to the most appropriate body. For example, workplace relations complaints must be referred to the Fair Work Ombudsman.

The TSL Program has a stand-alone review process, underpinned by the Trade Support Loans Act 2014. The review process is outlined in *section 3.1.14 of these Operating Guidelines (Trade Support Loans – review and escalation process)* and in the TSL Program Guidelines.

#### 4.6.2 National Customer Service Line

The National Customer Service Line assists individuals, businesses and interested members of the public with queries and complaints regarding employment services for the Department, Department of Social Services and National Indigenous Australians Agency.

They are also the central contact for all Commonwealth Government funded employment support services, apprenticeships, vocational education and training lines. Including:

- Skilling
- Employer Hotline
- Employer Reporting Line
- National Customer Service Line Transfer Line.

Anyone with a complaint or query about the training sector can report a complaint and have it referred to the right authority for consideration. This hotline is available on 1800 020 108 – please select option 3.

The department's expectation is that any complaints/concerns about the Provider are dealt with by the Provider, in the first instance. However, where the complainant expresses a desire to escalate their complaint/concern, they should be referred to the National Customer Service Line.

#### 4.7 Sanctions

The department may enforce a number of sanctions should the Provider's performance drop below the agreed standards as outlined in their Deed. These may include:

- requiring the removal of a field officer's approval to undertake apprenticeship sign-ups
- requiring remedial training to be provided, at the Provider's cost, to field officer and/or administrative staff
- continued failure to meet minimum performance standards may result in the department withholding all future Fee for Service payments until Providers rectify the poor performance to the department's satisfaction.

Where the department is considering applying a sanction, Providers will be advised in writing prior to the date of application.

### 4.7.1 Application of sanctions

Instances where sanctions may be applied include:

- Where the Provider fails to achieve administrative monitoring benchmarks or does not demonstrate improved performance after formal feedback (regarding incorrect determination of payments), the department may require that the Provider deliver training to relevant staff (to be organised by the Provider). This must occur within 30 business days of written notice from the department. The department reserves the right to attend this training. If training is not completed within the required timeframe or is not to a standard considered acceptable by the department, then all future Fee For Service payments may be withheld until the training is undertaken to the department's satisfaction or the Provider's administrative performance is improved to the department's satisfaction.
- Continued failure over 2 monitoring periods to meet minimum performance standards may result in the department withholding future Fee for Service payments until the Provider rectifies the poor performance to the department's satisfaction.
- If requested by the department, a Provider must provide an explanation of anomalies between their performance of the Support Services and how they undertook to perform the Support Services in their tender bid, within 28 calendar days. Failure to provide the requested explanation by the required date may result in Fee for Service payments being withheld until the requested report/s are provided and accepted.
- As per servicing multi-region employers (Clause 2.21 of the Deed), where a Provider services employers in a Service Region(s) outside their Service Region(s), they must meet the requirements of the STA in the state or territory for the Service Region(s) in which the employer has engaged the apprentice(s). The Provider must also meet with those STAs within one calendar month of starting servicing in another Service Region(s). Where a Provider does not meet with the STA within the required time frame, the department may withhold future Fee for Service payments for servicing being delivered outside of the Provider's Service Region(s) until such time as the meeting occurs.

## 5 FEES

*(Relates to section 2.4 of the RFT)*

### 5.1 Support Services fees

Providers receive Fee for Service payments for providing the Services set out in section 2 of these Operating Guidelines.

#### 5.1.1 Charging for service provision

The provision of Support Services under the Support Services Deed is free to apprentices, employers and other interested persons.

#### 5.1.2 Claiming fees and payments

Providers will claim all Fee for Service payments through ADMS. Services attracting a Fee for Service payment must be entered into ADMS within 30 days of delivery of the service to be paid the relevant Fee for Service.

#### 5.1.3 Fees paid to Providers

##### **Assessment Services Payments**

Providers will be paid a Fee for Service for the delivery of each Assessment Services place and recording of that service in ADMS based upon the Provider's contracted Assessment Services unit price. Assessment Services are paid on an apprenticeship basis – that is, where an Assessment Service is undertaken for both the apprentice and the employer (where the employer is deemed to be an Employer Requiring Support), Providers will receive one Fee for Service

##### **Mentoring and Personal Support Services Payments**

Mentoring and Personal Support Services will be paid as 4 separate Fee for Service payments in the following order:

- 25% of the contracted Mentoring and Personal Support Services unit price on lodgement of an agreed TSP in ADMS
- 25% of the contracted Mentoring and Personal Support Services unit price on completion of the first eligible Mentoring and Personal Support Services contact
- 25% of the contracted Mentoring and Personal Support Services unit price on completion of the second eligible Mentoring and Personal Support Services contact
- 25% of the contracted Mentoring and Personal Support Services unit price on completion of the third eligible Mentoring and Personal Support Services contact.

An eligible contact is defined as a contact between the Provider and mentee (apprentice or employer) that occurs at least one month after the sign-up date and at least 3 months after the most recent eligible contact.

Scheduled peer support networking meetings may also be recorded as one of the 3 Mentoring and Personal Support Services contacts but are only paid as 12.5% of the Mentoring and Personal Support Services unit price.

## Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services – Contact Payments

Tables 8 and 9 outline the payment structures for the delivery of Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services (*Refer section 2.4 of these Operating Guidelines*) which will be paid on a Fee for Service basis for relevant apprentice Progress Contacts, only. The payment rates are drawn from the Provider’s contracted unit price for Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services for Enhanced apprentices in metropolitan Australia. Generalist apprentices Contact Payment rates are 65% of the Enhanced apprentice rate.

Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services Progress Contacts delivered to apprentices in Regional and Remote Australia will be paid Fee for Service at an amount of:

- 110% of the Provider’s metropolitan rate for apprentices located in **Regional** Australia – based on the apprentice’s workplace address; and
- 130% of the Provider’s metropolitan rate for apprentices located in **Remote** Australia – based on the apprentice’s workplace address.

This recognises the higher delivery costs associated with delivering these contacts in Regional and Remote Australia.

## Engagement Services – Progress Contact Payments (Contact Payments)

Tables 8 and 9 outline the Contact Payments relating to Progress Contacts with apprentices.

Table 8 – Contact Payment structure for **General Services** apprentices

Contact Payment No.	Milestone Per cent	Contact Payment Point	Contact Payment timing	Services to be delivered
1.	25%	Sign-Up or recommencement	Automated payment through ADMS once sign-up visit recorded, and Training Contract approved by STA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign-up process and contact</li> <li>• Lodgement of Training Contract and approval by STA</li> <li>• Assessment of employer and apprentice incentives eligibility</li> </ul>
2.	40%	Completion	Automated payment through ADMS once completion contact recorded, and STA confirms completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion contact</li> <li>• Administrative assistance to achieve sign-off</li> <li>• Assistance claiming outstanding incentives</li> </ul>

Table 9 – Contact Payment structure for **Enhanced Services** apprentices

Contact Payment No.	Milestone Per cent	Contact Payment Point	Contact Payment timing	Services to be delivered
1.	25%	Sign-Up or recommencement	Automated payment through ADMS once sign-up visit recorded, and Training Contract approved by STA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign-up process and contact</li> <li>• Lodgement of Training Contract and approval by STA</li> <li>• Assessment of employer and apprentice incentives eligibility</li> </ul>
2.	15%	7-week contact	Automated payment through ADMS once contact recorded and milestone date reached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact made with apprentice</li> <li>• Mentoring and Personal Support Services offered</li> </ul>
3.	10%	3-month contact	Automated payment through ADMS once contact recorded and milestone date reached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact made with apprentice</li> <li>• Mentoring and Personal Support Services offered</li> </ul>
4.	10%	7-month contact	Automated payment through ADMS once contact recorded and milestone date reached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact made with apprentice</li> <li>• Mentoring and Personal Support Services offered</li> </ul>
5.	40%	Completion	Automated payment through ADMS once completion contact recorded, and STA confirms completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion contact</li> <li>• Administrative assistance to achieve sign-off</li> <li>• Assistance claiming outstanding incentives</li> </ul>

### Early completions and cancellations

Where an apprenticeship is completed or cancelled prior to a Contact Payment Point, and the required Progress Contact related to that Contact Point has been undertaken, no fee is payable related to that Contact Point.

For example, if a Provider has undertaken the 7-month contact on the expected date and the apprenticeship is subsequently backdated as:

- completed at the 6-month point, they are eligible for the Completion Contact Payment once they have met all other requirements, but they are not eligible for the 7-month contact fee
- cancelled at the 6-month point, they are not eligible for the 7-month Contact Payment.

### Non-payment or recovery of Contact Payments

The department will not pay the Contact Payment in the following circumstances:

- the apprentice is not employed as an apprentice at the relevant Contact Point
- the apprentice has successfully completed the apprenticeship prior to the relevant Contact Point (e.g., accelerated progression and early completion) and the contact was not undertaken
- Providers make contact outside the allowable Contact Timeframe – that is, 2 weeks either side of the relevant Contact Point.

If Providers subsequently make contact outside the relevant Contact Timeframe, they must submit the Contact Payment as a special claim and demonstrate to the department's satisfaction

exceptional circumstances as to why the contact was not made within the Contact Timeframe, as set out in *Tables 3 and 4 in section 2.4.6 of these Operating Guidelines*. The department will assess these claims on a case-by-case basis.

For further information on Progress Contacts being made outside of the relevant Contact Timeframe due to unsuccessful attempts to contact the apprentice, refer to *Item 2.4.6 Progress Contacts*.

In cases where Providers have claimed a Contact Payment and the STA subsequently backdates the cancellation on a Training Contract, the department may recover the fee.

### Completion fee eligibility criteria

#### Definition of Successful Completion

Successful completion means that the apprentice:

- has successfully completed all the relevant training, both on and off-the-job
- is recognised as having successfully completed their apprenticeship by the relevant STA or is recognised as a tradesperson by the State or Territory Government, where relevant.

Evidence must be provided that the apprentice has successfully completed the qualification.

Evidence may be documentation which should be, at a minimum, the qualification issued by the STA or the RTO according to the requirements in the State or Territory where the Training Contract is registered.

Where Providers are advised of successful completion by the STA through the STA interface, this constitutes sufficient evidence.

#### Eligibility

The Completion Contact Payment is payable on successful completion of the apprenticeship once Providers meet the following requirements:

- verification that the apprentice has successfully completed the apprenticeship
- assurance that all relevant incentives claims have been processed where applicable
- Progress Contacts have been made as required based on the completion date.

Providers must record all contact with apprentices and employers and upload any documentation to the apprenticeship file.

To be eligible for the Completion Contact Payment, Providers must, where relevant, assist the employer to claim or verify their Incentives Completion payment. If, for reasons outside the Provider's control, the employer has not claimed or verified the Incentives Completion payment, Providers will be able to claim their Contact Completion Payment if there is evidence that they have attempted to assist the employer to verify the Incentives Completion payment.

#### Early completion

If an apprenticeship is completed early, and the Contact Point is not reached (regardless of successful completion or cancellation) the Contact Payment is not payable, even where Providers have made the relevant Progress Contact. In the case of successful Completion, the Completion Contact Payment is payable, subject to meeting the Completion Fee for Service requirements.

#### Recommencement fee eligibility criteria

Recommencement occurs where an apprentice undertaking an STA approved Training Contract continues their apprenticeship with a new employer.

Recommencement does not include an apprentice:

- who commences (and may have completed) a Training Contract at Certificate II level and subsequently commences a Training Contract at Certificate III-IV level
- entering into an apprenticeship that is different to that previously undertaken.

A recommencement Fee for Service is not payable for transfers from one Provider to another, where the employer is unchanged.

Providers must complete recommencements using the same requirements for a sign-up.

### **Apprenticeship Recommencement fee eligibility**

To claim the recommencement fee, Providers must undertake the sign-up of the apprenticeship in line with the requirements at *section 2.2.3 of these Operating Guidelines*.

Providers must have completed a sign-up meeting, facilitated the administrative tasks associated with the sign-up, the Training Contract must be approved by the relevant STA, and the STA identifier must be recorded in ADMS.

#### Non-payment of Fees

If the apprenticeship ceases without a completed apprenticeship recommencement sign-up, no recommencement fee is payable.

The department may recover the recommencement fee from Providers in circumstances prescribed in clause 4 of the Deed.

### **Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services – Administration Fee Payment**

In addition, at the beginning of each quarter, Providers will be paid an Administration Fee. The Administration Fee recognises the ongoing technical support expected to be delivered by Providers as a part of Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services. The Administration Fee will be calculated by the department as the number of apprentices in-training with the Provider at the beginning of the quarter, multiplied by the fixed Administration Fee price of \$35.00 (GST inclusive) per in-training apprentice, per quarter; and paid thereafter. The first payment for this Deed will be made with a milestone date of 1 July 2024.

## Summary of fees

Table 10 – Summary of Australian Apprenticeship Support Services 2024–2026 payment model

Payment type	How determined	Payment basis	Payment structure	Regional weighting
<b>Assessment</b>	Contracted Unit Price 1	Single Fee for Service on recording of Assessment Services for eligible client on ADMS	Single Fee for Service	No
<b>Mentoring and Personal Support Services</b>	Contracted Unit Price 3	Percentage Fee for Service paid upon lodgement of support plan in ADMS and completion of mentoring contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lodgement of Training Support Plan – 25%</li> <li>• First eligible contact – 25%</li> <li>• Second eligible contact – 25%</li> <li>• Third eligible contact – 25%</li> </ul>	No
<b>Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services – Progress Contacts</b>	Contracted Unit Price 2	Percentage Fee for Service (based on Enhanced Services metropolitan unit price) paid upon completion of Progress Contacts	<p><i>General Services apprentices:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign-up – 25%</li> <li>• Completion contact – 40%</li> </ul> <p><i>Enhanced Services apprentices:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign-up – 25%</li> <li>• 7-week contact – 15%</li> <li>• 3-month contact – 10%</li> <li>• 7-month contact – 10%</li> <li>• Completion contact – 40%</li> </ul>	Yes
<b>Administration Fee</b>	Fixed price	Lump sum paid quarterly in advance based on apprentices in-training at the start of the quarter	At the start of each quarter Provider is paid the number of apprentices in-training multiplied by \$35 (GST inclusive)	No

### Tender Service Region and zones

Further to *section 1.6 of these Operating Guidelines:*

The department pays the applicable General Services and Enhanced Services fees based on the Provider's Deed price and any applicable geographical weighting (Metropolitan, Regional, or Remote) within this payment structure.

Table 11 – Service Regions and Zones that fall within each region

Service Region	Zone
Australian Capital Territory	Metropolitan
New South Wales	Metropolitan, Regional, and Remote
Northern Territory	Regional and Remote
Queensland	Metropolitan, Regional, and Remote
South Australia	Metropolitan, Regional, and Remote
Tasmania	Regional, and Remote
Victoria	Metropolitan, Regional, and Remote
Western Australia ( <i>Perth and surrounds only</i> )	Metropolitan, Regional, and Remote

### Lodging Fee for Service claims

Providers must make claims for automated payment through ADMS— invoices are not required to be submitted to the department for payment.

Once Providers have met the fee requirements outlined in these guidelines and the Deed, and they have entered the relevant information into ADMS, payments require minimum processing through ADMS.

Where ADMS is unable to process a payment automatically, a Provider officer who is authorised by the department to lodge a claim, must manually do so in ADMS. The department will only process manual payments where ADMS does not allow automated payments.

### Recipient Created Tax Invoices and Adjustment Notes

The department provides a Recipient Created Tax Invoice, available from ADMS for Providers to download and print.

A Recipient Created Tax Invoice lists the amounts payable by the department for the relevant period and will list the Support Services to which these amounts relate.

Where the department recovers amounts through offsets against claims (*refer section 5.2.2 of these Operating Guidelines*), these are listed in the form of a Recipient Created Adjustment Note, available from ADMS.

## 5.2 Debt recovery

### 5.2.1 Overview

The department may recover from the Provider, overpayments or incorrect payments that have occurred as a result of the Provider's actions, including:

- FFS payments paid to Providers for Support Services (such as, Assessment, Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support, and Mentoring and Personal Support Services)
- payments made under the Commonwealth Apprenticeship Incentives Programs to employers, apprentices or RTOs.

### 5.2.2 Fee Recovery

Where Providers have been paid a fee but have not met the requirements specified in the Deed or in these Operating Guidelines to be entitled to the fee, the department may recover from Providers the full amount paid.

The department may offset these fees against future fee payments.

### 5.2.3 Fee payment recovery

The department will initiate fee payment recoveries when it identifies that eligibility requirements, as stipulated in the Deed, and these Operating Guidelines, have not been met.

The department will notify Providers in writing (including email), of the amount to be recovered and the processes to be followed.

### 5.2.4 AAIP and Incentives System payment recovery

Overpayments or incorrect payments of Commonwealth Apprenticeship Incentives Programs to employers, apprentices or RTOs may be identified by:

- the department's targeted monitoring
- the department's internal data reviews
- the department's fraud investigations
- the department's internal audits
- Providers undertaking their own internal monitoring assessments.

Where Providers identify potential overpayments or incorrect payments through their own internal monitoring processes, they must advise their Contract Manager as soon as possible. The department will determine whether an overpayment has occurred and will advise if Providers are required to take any further action.

Providers must not notify employers, apprentices or RTOs of potential debts unless advised to do so by the department. This is because the department may decide to make contact directly, determine there is no debt or that the debt is recoverable from Providers.

Providers must record details of any overpayments (including any directions by the department to apply an offset) on the relevant apprentice file. Details must be recorded as a file note and include (where applicable) the ADMS Apprenticeship ID, amount to be offset and date advised by the department to apply the offset.

Where an offset has been successfully applied to a subsequent Commonwealth Apprenticeship Incentives Program payment, a file note must also be added confirming that the offset has been applied.

### 5.2.5 TSL payment recovery

Overpayment debts or incorrect payments of TSL to apprentices may be identified by:

- the department's targeted monitoring
- the department's internal data reviews
- the department's fraud investigations
- the department's internal audits
- Providers undertaking their own internal monitoring assessments.

Where the department identifies overpayments, it will undertake debt recovery action in accordance with the Deed.

Where Providers identify potential overpayments or incorrect payments through their own internal monitoring processes, they must advise their Contract Manager as soon as possible. The department will determine whether an overpayment has occurred and will advise of the action to occur. This may include advising Providers whether they are to notify the apprentice of the error in the payment of TSL.

Providers must not notify apprentices of potential overpayment debts until advised by the department of the action to occur. This is because the department may contact the apprentice directly or determine there is no debt to be recovered.

### 5.2.6 Recovery policy

The department will recover an incorrect payment or overpayment from Providers:

- if the incorrect payment is due to an administration error by the Provider
- the Provider failed to notify the department of fraudulent activity
- the Provider failed to notify the department of activity designed to manipulate the Program to obtain payments.

The following administrative error debts will not be recovered from Providers, where they have made the payment in good faith:

- payments sent to miscoded bank accounts – that is to persons unrelated to the employer, apprentice and RTO, based on information supplied by the employer, apprentice or RTO
- duplicate payments made on duplicate registrations, where the duplication is the result of action taken by the employer, apprentice or RTO
- payments of TSL.

In these cases, the debts will be recovered from the recipients.

Where debt recovery is warranted, the department will recover the amount from Providers by withholding Fee for Service payments equal to the incorrect payment amount.

### 5.2.7 Recovery process

The department will:

- discuss the overpayment with Providers prior to commencing recovery action
- provide recovery advice to Providers by email confirming the offsetting amount against their next Fee for Service payment period – ADMS will be adjusted to reflect the recovered amounts
- as required by Goods and Service Tax (GST) legislation, issue a Recipient Created Adjustment Note to Providers representing the amount offset – the Recipient Created Adjustment Note will be available to Providers through ADMS.

## 6. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

In performing the services set out in these Operating Guidelines, Providers are expected to undertake general administrative functions, relating to record management and stakeholder engagement, in line with departmental requirements, as set out below.

### 6.1 Data quality

Providers are required to collect data in relation to apprenticeships and record it in ADMS in line with the standards outlined below. The data captured through the apprenticeships program is used for program administration, policy development and data matching with other agencies.

In particular, Providers must ensure that they:

- record all names in their entirety as per the identification provided at sign-up to enable data matching (for example, Robert is not referred to as Bob on the Training Contract) and consistent with the client's myGov account.
- collect all addresses in line with the Australian Address Standards which are available from [www.anzlic.gov.au/resources/national-address-management-framework](http://www.anzlic.gov.au/resources/national-address-management-framework) and ensure that the address is valid – for example, **enter physical addresses rather than PO Boxes**
- enter bank account details accurately
- ensure email addresses are correct
- gather and correctly record any other information required to lodge or validate a Training Contract or process claims under the Commonwealth Apprenticeship Programs
- record apprenticeship cancellations and withdrawals in a timely manner.

#### 6.1.1 Data quality measurements

Providers must meet KPIs 7 and 8 in relation to data quality. Compliance with these KPIs will be monitored by the department.

### 6.2 Information management

These Record Rules set out the correct procedures for the disclosure of information and the storage and handling of client records and may be amended as required by the department.

The 13 Australian Privacy Principles outlined in the *Privacy Act 1988* must be observed and are the primary reference in relation to the creation and administration of records under the Deed. In particular, Providers must advise apprentices and employers of Australian Privacy Principle 5 which relates to the collection and use of their personal information.

The Record Rules support the department's *Recordkeeping Policy* documents which are available from the Provider's Contract Manager upon request.

#### 6.2.1 Interpretation

In these Record Rules unless the contrary intention appears:

**'Document'** means any record of information, both electronic and in hardcopy and includes:

- anything on which there is writing
- anything on which there are marks, figures or symbols having a meaning for persons qualified to interpret them
- anything from which sounds, images or writing can be reproduced with or without the aid of anything else

- a map, plan, drawing or photograph; and includes:
  - any part of the document
  - any copy, reproduction or duplicate of the document or any part of the document
  - any part of such a copy, reproduction or duplicate
  - an electronic copy of a document

**‘Client Records’** means those documents referred to in the following section – ‘Documents which are Clients Records’.

**‘Australian Privacy Principle’** means any of the Australian Privacy Principles set out in Schedule 1 to the *Privacy Act 1988*.

**‘Personal Information’** means information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database), whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion.

## 6.2.2 Documents which are Client Records

For the purpose of these Operating Guidelines, a client record means all documents regarding the provision of Support Services to apprentices and employers and include the following documents:

- documents regarding a person, regarding the provision of Support Services
- documents created by Providers in the course of providing Support Services to, or in respect of, an apprentice – for example, application and claim forms
- documents which vary a document referred to in the points above
- Training Contracts
- documents which vary a Training Contract
- correspondence or reports regarding compliance with Training Contracts
- records of expenditure regarding an apprentice
- records of program usage by an apprentice
- reports on an apprentice’s progress
- documents regarding a complaint made by an apprentice or on behalf of an apprentice concerning the provision of Support Services
- Curriculum Vitae or résumés regarding an apprentice’s work skills and experience
- correspondence between Providers and an apprentice
- correspondence regarding the provision of Support Services to an apprentice between Providers and:
  - the department
  - an employer
  - any other entity
- assessments of an apprentice
- correspondence or reports regarding a breach of a Training Contract
- any other documents that relate directly to the provision of Support Services and the particular apprentice.

## 6.2.3 Client Record Rules

A document consisting of, or containing personal information, can only be provided to a third party by the department or a Provider, strictly for the purpose of administering apprenticeships. The person pertaining to the document(s) being shared, must provide written consent by submitting a Document Release form (available in the Attachments to these Operating Guidelines).

Providers must not:

- accept information about a person other than the apprentice, or information that is not for the purpose of administering apprenticeships
- destroy or otherwise dispose of a client record
- damage a client record
- transfer or be a party to an arrangement for the transfer of the custody of a client record to any person, entity or organisation except as provided for in the Provider to Provider Transfers section of these Guidelines – *refer section 6.4.4 of these Operating Guidelines (Client Record Transfers)*.

The department, and Providers must not use personal information without the written consent of the apprentice to whom the information relates.

Providers must:

- ensure that the use of client records is only for the purpose directly related to the purposes for which Providers have been engaged to provide Support Services
- ensure that any disclosure of client records is:
  - in the course of providing Support Services to an apprentice and, if it contains personal information, that the individual to whom the information relates has been made aware of the disclosure in the manner required by Australian Privacy Principle 5
  - authorised by law
  - with the written authority of the department
  - where Providers believe, on reasonable grounds, that the disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious or imminent threat to the life or health of the individual concerned or another person
- create and keep client records in accordance with the department's instructions as issued from time to time
- keep any hardcopy client records in a segregated area which is accessible to Providers and their employees only, and which is equipped with lockable cabinets or secure information systems to be used solely for the storage of the records
- ensure that copying of, and access to, client records is restricted to the Provider's staff employed to provide Support Services
- ensure that Provider client records and records under the Deed are available for inspection, monitoring and audit at the request of departmental officers
- provide copies/original documents of Provider client records and records under the Deed immediately when requested by the department or within the time otherwise specified by the department
- provide copies/original documents of Provider client records and records under the Deed at the end of the provision of Support Services in respect of an apprentice, or Assessment Services provided, relating to a potential apprentice.

Or, if so, advised by the department in writing:

- give to the department all Commonwealth Material and Provider client records including personal information, which should be identified as such before returning the document to the department.

The following information may be copied, retained and stored in the Provider's segregated area (for the purpose of claims from the department):

- the name and address of the apprentice
- the period in which the services were provided to an apprentice
- the nature of those services
- the outcome of those services
- statistical information regarding an apprentice that is to be aggregated with statistical information regarding other apprentices.

Under the Deed between the department and Providers, officers from the department's Fraud Unit and anyone authorised by the Secretary in writing, on production of photo identification, may enter the Provider's premises to investigate a possible breach of the law and to examine and copy documents or extract electronic information in relation to the administration of these Operating Guidelines, or Deed with the department.

Providers are advised that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence.

#### 6.2.4 Information to be provided to apprentices

All apprentices receiving support from Providers must be advised of the content of Australian Privacy Principle 5, in particular the collection and use of their personal information. If a Provider is providing Support Services to an apprentice, they must:

- advise the apprentice in writing and ensure their awareness (by collecting their acknowledgment) of Australian Privacy Principle 5
- this advice must detail that:
  - information collected will be used for program administration, monitoring and evaluation and calculating payment eligibility for both employers and apprentices
  - information collected may be shared with other agencies such as State governments, the ATO, Services Australia and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research
  - information collected may also be shared with other organisations and agencies as authorised by the department or as required by law
  - documents created by Providers containing personal information will be given to the department at the end of the provision of Support Services
  - documents will not be used by the department without their written consent
- advise the apprentice of the complaints handling procedure in relation to breaches of privacy

#### 6.2.5 Notification about Breaches and Complaints

Providers shall immediately notify the department when an unauthorised disclosure of a client record has occurred. The department and Providers must immediately notify each other after receiving a complaint about a breach, or potential breach, of the client Record Rules set out in these Operating Guidelines.

#### 6.2.6 Disclosure of Commonwealth owned data to a third party

Providers must not provide any data relating to apprenticeships to a third party. Instead, they must refer anyone seeking any related data to the department to ascertain whether it is appropriate to share the information. Alternatively, and if appropriate, Providers can refer data seeking requests to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) to access publicly available apprenticeship information.

## 6.3 Apprenticeship file notes

Effective record keeping is a crucial component of a Provider's role and maintaining apprenticeship file notes is one element of this. Providers must:

- record all actions taken in the delivery of Support Services for all apprenticeships they manage. At a minimum, apprenticeship file notes must identify the time, date, participants involved, and outcomes of any contact undertaken with any party to the apprenticeship
- provide the department with access to the Provider apprenticeship file notes as required. This may be to assist with performance monitoring, investigations or other program management reasons.

The department will review apprenticeship file notes as part of monitoring Provider performance.

Refer to section 2.4.6 of these Operating Guidelines for more information regarding effective record keeping.

## 6.4 File management

Training Contracts and claim forms will be collected via e-lodgement. Training Contract data is uploaded into ADMS automatically.

The apprentice file is an electronic file containing information regarding an apprentice.

### 6.4.1 Creating an apprentice File

#### Electronic Files

Data for Training Contracts and claim forms are collected via an online form and stored electronically. As such, Providers must maintain an electronic file that is sent to the department as one, or a small number of PDF files when the file is to be archived.

File naming conventions, as set out in these Operating Guidelines, must be followed when creating and storing electronic apprentice files.

Details relating to the document order within a file can be found in the Operating Guidelines Attachments.

Once a record is finalised (completed, cancelled, closed), the department will make arrangements for storage of electronic information.

### 6.4.2 File Naming Conventions

Files must follow the department's file naming conventions, which are set out below:

- File Number\* – Last Name, First name – Registration ID – Employer Trading Name – Provider No, for example, AAC161234 – Abnett, Jenny – 6660007 – Employer Boxing Australia – Provider 987654

*\* The File number will be generated by ADMS, and this naming convention must be used for electronic files.*

## 6.4.3 Archiving files

### Archiving electronic file records

Electronic Files must be returned to the department in either MS Office, TIFF or PDF format. Each file should either be a single document – for example, scanned PDF, or contained within a single folder. Titling must be in accordance with the file naming conventions. Multiple electronic files may be transferred in a method arranged by the department or the Provider's Contract Manager. This could be on a secure encrypted USB stick or secure file transfer system.

### Retrieving Archived files

Requests for the retrieval of a closed (archived) file must be made in writing to the Provider's Contract Manager.

Providers must provide:

- the reason they require the file
- the client ID and Registration Number
- the name and date of birth of the apprentice.

Archived files will be provided to Providers electronically. Should Providers need to place additional documentation on the electronic file, they are to scan the documents and provide the scanned copy to their Contract Manager. When scanning documents, it is recommended that:

- documents are scanned in black and white
- double sided
- no more than 300dpi.

Any additional documents must be saved and sent to the Provider's Contract Manager using the naming conventions in the section *File Naming Conventions*. The Provider's Contract Manager will then add the additional documents to the department's Information Management System.

## 6.4.4 Client record transfers (Provider to Provider)

In line with the principles of employer choice, an employer may elect to transfer their business from one Provider (the transferring Provider) to another (the receiving Provider) at any time.

Providers must provide advice to employers to assist the transfer of business from one Provider to another. This advice includes providing an explanation of the process for having business transferred and which business should be transferred.

The department's expectation is that the decision to change Providers is initiated by the employer. Providers must be mindful of their obligations under the Provider Code of Conduct when dealing with employers who choose to move their business between Providers. The department may monitor requests to change Providers.

### Effecting Transfers of client records – step by step

#### 1. Request to transfer a client record

An employer wanting to transfer their business from one Provider to another, must request this in writing (email is acceptable) to the Provider's Contract Manager, care of the receiving Provider. The request from the employer must include:

- by email – the business ABN, Legal and Trading name, full name and position title of the employee requesting the transfer, their authority to request a transfer and importantly, the reason for the transfer

- by letter – be submitted on letterhead, including the business ABN, Legal and Trading name, full name and position title of the employee requesting the transfer, their authority to request a transfer and importantly, the reason for the transfer.

**Note:** Employers may be contacted by the Provider's Contract Manager to confirm instigation of the transfer has been made by the employer, and not by the Provider.

The receiving Provider must complete a *Network Provider to Network Provider Transfer* form, available in the Operating Guidelines Attachments issued to Providers with these Guidelines, and include the following information:

- a list of ADMS Apprenticeship IDs to be transferred including apprentice name and employer IDs (from ADMS)
- ADMS Apprenticeship IDs and site code that the apprenticeship record will be attached to.

It is important that the business' ABN matches the employer Name on ADMS record(s) to be transferred; if the employer is affiliated with several organisations and the representative approving the request is authorised to transfer the Support Services business for all, then all the affiliated business names and details must be included.

For example: Request says ABC Pty Ltd, however, the request for transfer is for records labelled ABC Pty Ltd, XYZ Pty Ltd, and LMNO Pty Ltd. The authority needs to list all company names and explain the relationship of these companies and the authority the person has to authorise the transfer of the Support Services business for all these companies.

The receiving Provider must forward the advice from the employer and a completed Provider to Provider Transfer form to their Contract Manager.

Requests to transfer files must come via the Provider. Direct requests from employers cannot be actioned by the department.

## 2. Preparation of client records for transfer

Electronic documents held by the transferring Provider must be provided to the receiving Provider in either MS Office, TIFF, PDF format or through a file transfer. This must include a copy of the Training Contract.

The transferring Provider must keep copies of visit/contacts as recorded in ADMS for their own records, as these constitute part of the apprentice's file as well as the Provider's financial records.

The Provider's Contract Manager will transfer records created in ADMS. The transferring Provider must ensure that all information stored in ADMS is correct and up to date prior to the transfer effect date.

## 3. Date of Effect of transfer

The Contract Manager must notify both the transferring Provider and the receiving Provider of the transfer request and the date of effect for the transfer. The Contract Manager will affect the transfer in ADMS on or after the date of effect.

The date of effect of transfer (or the start of the receiving Provider management period) is 14 days after the transfer advice has been forwarded to the transferring Provider, unless otherwise notified by the Provider's Contract Manager.

#### 4. Obligations of the transferring Provider

Once a transferring Provider has received notification from the Contract Manager about the transfer, it has 14 days to:

- lodge all outstanding claims up to the date of effect of the transfer and arrange payment to employers and apprentices
- maintain a record of all client files transferred as required in the relevant State or Territory. The record should be signed off to confirm the:
  - name of the transferring Provider
  - name of the apprentice(s)
  - name of the receiving Provider
  - date the original client record was dispatched.

The transferring Provider must notify the employer and their Contract Manager in the event that the transfer of the employer's record is subject to delay or not being processed.

#### 5. Obligations of the receiving Provider

##### **Prior to the transfer**

Where registrations being transferred are located outside the receiving Provider's Service Region(s), notification of servicing outside of their Service Region(s) must be submitted to the receiving Provider's Contract Manager.

On receipt of the client records (files) from the transferring Provider, the receiving Provider must:

- ensure client records (files) are complete
- liaise with the transferring Provider to follow up any forms and reports that are required/outstanding
- advise their Contract Manager of instances where client records (files) have been transferred without adequate documentation
- notify the apprentice that their employer has elected to transfer their business from XX Provider to XX Provider and make it clear that if the apprentice requires support, they should contact their new Provider (provide new Provider contact details to the apprentice).

##### **Completion of transfer**

The receiving Provider must advise the employer in writing that the transfer of records is complete within 4 weeks of the transfer and must include contact details for the employer.

Where the apprentice is eligible for Incentives System payments or TSL, the receiving Provider must also, in writing, advise the recipient of these payments of their new Provider including contact details.

Claim applications submitted after the completion of the transfer will be assessed by the receiving Provider.

##### **Circumstances where a transfer should not take place**

Client records should not be transferred in the following circumstances:

###### Successful completions and cancellations

Where the apprenticeship was cancelled prior to the date of effect of the transfer, or where the apprentice has successfully completed the apprenticeship prior to the Expected End Date and the date of effect of transfer, the transferring Provider must enter the Actual End Date in ADMS, and the client record (file) need not be transferred.

If, after the transfer takes place, the STA records a successful completion or cancellation that is prior to the date of effect of the transfer, the client record will remain with the receiving Provider. The transfer occurred according to these Operating Guidelines at the date of effect of the transfer and will not be reversed where backdating the Actual End Date occurs.

#### Expected End Date

Where a Training Contract's Expected End Date is prior to the date of effect of transfer, the file will not be transferred. If, however, the STA confirms a deferral of the Expected End Date to a date on or after the date of effect of transfer, the file may be transferred.

#### Recommencements

Where the transfer is a result of a recommencement there is no requirement to transfer the client record (file) to the receiving Provider. These client records (files) must be returned to the department in accordance with the archiving procedures of these Operating Guidelines.

**Please note:** If the transferring Provider is aware that one of the abovementioned circumstances has occurred prior to the date of effect of the transfer and it is not possible to close the Registration, (e.g., if confirmation of the End Date has not been received from the STA) then the transferring Provider must also advise the receiving Provider and their Contract Manager that this client record (file) should not be included in the transfer.

#### NSW 'Future End Dates'

If at the date of effect of the transfer the NSW STA database shows a successful completion date that is on or after the effect date of the transfer, the record must still be transferred. Only registrations with an Actual End Date that is prior to the effect date of the transfer are not to be transferred.

#### **Change of Ownership**

Where there has been a change of ownership of the business employing an apprentice, the new Training Contract (or documentation required in that State or Territory) must be placed on the existing client record (file) for that apprentice. The client record (file) should then be transferred to the Provider selected by the new owner, where different to the previous owner.

#### **Fees**

A Provider that is transferring business is entitled to any instalment of Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services fees if a Contact Point of the apprenticeship occurs before the date of effect of transfer and it has met the conditions for payment.

Following the date of effect of transfer, all outstanding fees are potentially payable to the new Provider.

## **6.5 IT system**

The Training and Youth Internet Management System (TYIMS) will be replaced by the Apprenticeships Data Management System (ADMS), which is administered by the department and contain details for all apprenticeships.

Providers will need to use ADMS, entering information related to the delivery of services under the Deed, and any third-party software system must interact with ADMS via Application Programming Interface (API) endpoints.

## 6.6 Stakeholder engagement/communications strategy

### 6.6.1 Aim and Purpose

The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy aims to provide clarity in regard to:

- the department and Providers' engagement activities anticipated for the Deed Period
- the department's expectations of Providers in relation to these activities
- the communication methods and protocols that the department will use throughout the Deed Period
- the department's expectations of Providers in relation to these communication methods and protocols.

The purpose of the department and Provider engagement activities detailed below is to:

- share knowledge
- gather industry and market intelligence
- create partnerships and relationships
- contribute to the overall effectiveness of the delivery of Support Services.

### 6.6.2 Communication Channels

The department's National Office is responsible for overall Deed management, including performance management and Provider CEO interaction.

The Provider's Contract Manager is responsible for day-to-day matters concerning the Deed and is the Provider's first point of contact with the department. Other activities they undertake include:

- sending correspondence to the Providers, particularly correspondence regarding issues of non-compliance or requests for remedial action
- establishing and maintaining communication with the Provider's main office and individual sites
- coordinating or undertaking performance and Deed compliance monitoring activities, such as site visits
- managing periodic risk assessments of the Provider's Support Services cohort
- investigating any complaints, facilitating problem resolution and undertaking remedial action
- identifying and reporting trends from performance monitoring activities
- informing the department's National Office of any emerging operational or policy issues that may affect the success of the Support Services network
- helping to coordinate activities of other areas of the department or the government that involve contact with Providers
- processing waivers in relation to the Commonwealth Apprenticeship Incentives System and TSL Programs as they occur
- finalising special claims
- providing Subject Matter Expertise for apprenticeships
- debt recovery.

The Provider's Contract Manager may delegate some of these tasks to other State Office departmental officers (their delegates).

Departmental officers may:

- represent the Contract Manager at on-site monitoring visits
- provide responses to enquiries in relation to the Commonwealth Apprenticeship Incentives Programs and these Operating Guidelines
- sign formal correspondence and issue emails to Providers

- sign correspondence or send emails to their equivalents on administrative matters such as amendments to ADMS, exceptional claims and transfers
- manage Deed and Operating Guidelines, Commonwealth Apprenticeship Incentives Programs Guidelines interpretations and advice prior to referral to or from the department's National Office
- perform tasks allowed by powers delegated to them via the Trade Support Loans Act 2014. This includes but is not limited to determining Trade Support Loan qualification and payability, and reviewing Trade Support Loan decisions
- undertake password resets relating to ADMS – Providers must contact the nominated State Office representative to undertake this functionality.

Technical enquiries regarding ADMS must be directed to the Help Desk on [ADMSengagement@dewr.gov.au](mailto:ADMSengagement@dewr.gov.au).

### 6.2.3 Communication Methods

The department undertakes to provide electronic versions (via email) of all hard copied correspondence.

### 6.2.4 Communication Turnaround

The department undertakes to respond to all correspondence received from Providers in accordance with the department's Service Charter.

It is expected that Providers will respond to all correspondence received from the department within their specified timeframes.

### 6.2.5 Engagement with Providers

The department encourages liaison with all Providers on issues regarding apprenticeships. In this context, the department will afford the same opportunity to all stakeholders to liaise with the department on issues regarding apprenticeships.

### 6.2.6 Stakeholder Events

It is anticipated that the events listed below will be conducted during the course of the Deed Period. Providers must attend these events and are responsible for their own travel expenses unless otherwise specified by the department.

Representative levels will be maintained as outlined to ensure that the department and Providers receive maximum benefit, unless otherwise notified by the department.

### Service Delivery National Forums

The department and Providers each have an interest in, and a joint commitment to, ensuring the effectiveness of Support Services. The Service Delivery National Forum will be held annually (where possible) and provide an opportunity for all Providers and the department to focus on nationally relevant operational and policy issues of importance to both groups and to ensure mutual understanding and mutually agreed arrangements that ensure that Providers are able to meet their obligations to the department under the Deed.

The Service Delivery Provider Forum will:

- promote cooperation, information exchange and consultation between all Providers and the department on policy and operational issues impacting on Support Services business
- aim to continuously improve the quality of service and efficiency of all Providers
- contribute to the overall effectiveness of the delivery of Support Services.

A minimum of one person per Provider will be required to attend.

### **State Based Reference Group meetings**

The department (or in some states/territories, the STA) will convene quarterly Reference Group meetings of Provider Managers in their State or Territory. This will provide an opportunity for Provider Managers to meet other Providers in their State or Territory and to identify and address local issues regarding the delivery of Support Services. Other stakeholders may be invited to participate in these forums such as STAs and Services Australia.

While details will be arranged at the local level, it is expected that these state based Reference Group meetings will be conducted, at minimum, on a quarterly basis.

### **Participation Satisfaction Surveys**

The department may choose to run Participation Satisfaction Surveys on an ad hoc basis. These surveys may be directed to different cohorts of the apprenticeship markets including, but not limited to:

- Employers/apprentices who have recently completed apprenticeships
- Employers/ apprentices who have recently cancelled apprenticeships
- Employers/apprentices from Key Client Groups.

The aim of these surveys will be to obtain information regarding their experiences with the apprenticeship program as a whole, but also information about their satisfaction with their Provider.

## 7. TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

*(Relates to section 2.7 of the RFT)*

### 7.1 Successful tenderers

Successful tenderers must accept a level of transferred business from both unsuccessful and non-tendering (previous) Providers in addition to any business awarded through the tender. Levels of transferred business will be determined by the department (this may include a determination that no business will be transferred), ensuring as little disruption to employers and apprentices as possible, taking into consideration market competition and other relevant factors.

#### 7.1.1 Allocating employers from existing Providers

Employers and apprentices who are serviced by an existing Australian Apprenticeships Support Network (AASN) Provider that is unsuccessful in gaining a Deed for the period commencing 1 July 2024 will be assigned by the department to another Provider in that Service Region.

In all cases, affected apprentices and employers will be advised by the department in writing of the Provider to which they have been assigned. Affected employers will be required to remain with their assigned Provider for the first 3 months from the commencement of new Deeds on 1 July 2024.

During this 3-month period, the incoming Provider must make contact with employers assigned to them to make them aware of apprenticeships services offering and identify any outstanding issues relating to claims or progress of the apprenticeships that require support.

#### 7.1.2 Pre-1 July 2024 business for existing AASN Providers

Existing AASN Providers who are successful in securing a 2024–2026 Deed and wish to claim fees for Contact Points that occurred prior to 1 July 2024 will be paid fees based on the unit price in their Deed for the 2020–2024 Deed Period.

#### 7.1.3 Providers who did not hold a 2020-2024 AASN Contract

Providers who did not hold a 2020-24 AASN Contract in a specific Service Region will also be required to service apprentices who commenced prior to 1 July 2024. These Providers will be paid for Contact Points that occur after 1 July 2024.

Providers who did not hold a 2020-24 AASN Contract in a specific Service Region will be paid fees in relation to transferred business based on the unit price applicable for the 2024–2026 Deed Period.

#### 7.1.4 Processing pre-1 July 2024 AAIP, Incentives System or AAIP payments

As part of the delivery of Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services, where there are outstanding claims payable under Incentives System and AAIP for transferred business, the incoming Provider will provide support to the employer and apprentice to claim these payments.

#### 7.1.5 Payment of fees

Support Services provided for apprentices transferred to a successful tenderer on commencement of the Service Delivery Deed Period will attract the remaining fees regarding the stage that the apprenticeship has reached, providing it occurs during the Deed Period. Providers will receive fees in relation to transferred business based on the unit price applicable for the 2024–2026 Deed Period.

Where ADMS is unable to process a payment automatically, a person authorised by the Provider to lodge a claim must manually do so in ADMS. Manual payments will only be processed where ADMS does not allow automated payments.

Providers are responsible for ensuring the validity, accuracy and completeness of data input to ADMS. Providers are also required to comply with any guidelines the department may provide on this issue. The department will provide training to Provider staff involved in payment processing prior to the start of the Deed Period so that Provider staff are sufficiently informed about using ADMS.

Providers are able to access ADMS to check on the status of claims. Comprehensive details on all claims and payments are available in ADMS.

## 7.2 Unsuccessful tenderers

### 7.2.1 Fees owing to unsuccessful Providers

Providers who do not win a Deed to deliver Support Services through the 2024–2026 Australian Apprenticeship Support Services tender process, will be required to claim all outstanding payments owed to them that relate to events that occurred within the 2020–2024 Contract period no later than 3 months after 1 July 2024. Systems access to ADMS will be maintained for the 3 months providing appropriate security and confidentiality arrangements are in place. Payments will only be made regarding events that occurred within the 1 February 2020 – 30 June 2024 Contract period.

### 7.2.2 Unsuccessful Providers – paper and electronic records

At the conclusion of the 2020–2024 Contract period, Providers who are not successful tenderers in the 2024–2026 Australian Apprenticeship Support Services tender process will be required to manage all records, and other Commonwealth material in the manner prescribed by the department.

## 7.3 Transition Out Plan

By 31 December 2024 the Provider must prepare and submit to the department a Transition Out Plan using the form provided by the Commonwealth (refer Operating Guidelines Attachments), setting out how the Support Services will be finalised for apprentices and employers who require support after a potential termination, reduction in scope, or expiry of this Deed.

The department will either accept or reject the Transition Out Plan (any rejection being on reasonable grounds). If rejected by the department, the Provider must provide an updated Transition Out Plan to the department, within a reasonable period notified by the department.

### 7.3.1 Transition Out

Upon the receipt of a notice issued by the department under clause 18 of the Deed, the Provider must complete the following transition out Support Services, and any additional transition out services specified in the Transition Out Plan, in accordance with any timing requirements in the Transition Out Plan:

- enter any outstanding data into ADMS
- ensure that any outstanding claims for payment of fees have been entered into ADMS
- transfer Provider records, relating to apprentices and employers, to the department or to any person nominated by the department and provide to the department a list of records transferred under clause 83.7(c)
- provide any outstanding reports, or any other information required by the department

- take the steps, if any, specified in a notice issued under clause 18, to finalise the remaining Support Services
- ensure that any outstanding claims for payment have been provided to the department
- if a notice issued under clause 18 requires the Provider to do so, provide a new Provider with the assistance necessary to enable the smooth transfer of apprentices and employers to that Provider
- cooperate with, and comply with, all reasonable requests and directions issued by the department relating to the transition out of the Provider's delivery of the Support Services.

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## ANNEXURE A - Definition of Terms

(Relates to Appendix B of the RFT)

<b>Apprenticeships Data Management System (ADMS)</b>	<p>The department’s IT system which supports the operation and management of Australian Apprenticeships; and is also used by the department to administer and manage the Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery 2024–2026 Deed. The Apprenticeships Data Management System (ADMS) replaces the Training and Youth Internet Management System (TYIMS).</p>
<b>Assessment Services</b>	<p>A pre-commencement assessment for every newly commencing apprentice, Key Client Group recommending apprentice, and ‘at risk’ employers that focuses on the development needs of the individual and, for ‘at risk’ employers, an assessment of the capacity of the employer to effectively support the apprenticeship through to completion.</p>
<b>Australia</b>	<p>When used in a geographical sense, includes all States and Territories.</p>
<b>Australian Apprentice (apprentice)</b>	<p>A person who by operation of State or Territory law, is an apprentice or trainee. Within these guidelines, the term Australian Apprentice or apprentice are used interchangeably and intended to encompass both apprentices and trainees.</p>
<b>Australian Apprentices located in Remote Australia</b>	<p>Australian Apprentices whose workplace location is considered under the Australian Statistical Geography Standard to be in Remote or Very Remote Australia.</p>
<b>Australian Apprentices Requiring Support</b>	<p>An Australian Apprentice who is not in an identified Key Client Group but whose apprenticeship is considered by the Provider to be at risk of non-completion.</p>
<b>Australian Apprentice with disability</b>	<p>For the purpose of AAIP and the Incentives System, persons are considered to have a disability if they have a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least 6 months and restricts everyday activities. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sensory</li> <li>• intellectual</li> <li>• physical</li> <li>• psychosocial</li> <li>• head injury, stroke or acquired brain injury; and</li> <li>• any other long term condition or ailment resulting in a restriction in everyday activities, or that the person is still receiving treatment or medication for.</li> </ul> <p>This definition based on ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.</p>

<b>Australian Apprenticeship (apprenticeship)</b>	An Australian Apprenticeship, commonly known as an apprenticeship or traineeship (referred to as ‘apprenticeship’ throughout these Operating Guidelines), is a learning pathway that combines paid on-the-job training and formal study with a Registered Training Organisation. Apprenticeships can be undertaken full time, part-time, or while at school.
<b>Australian Apprenticeship file</b>	An electronic record containing information regarding an apprenticeship.
<b>Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Operating Guidelines (Operating Guidelines)</b>	Contain operating processes for Providers.
<b>Australian Apprenticeship sign-up</b>	The process facilitated by Providers where an apprentice and employer sign-up to an apprenticeship Training Contract.
<b>Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Provider Code of Conduct (Provider Code of Conduct)</b>	The Code that applies to Providers and their staff and represents the minimum standards to be applied in all their dealings with apprentices, employers, and other relevant persons.
<b>Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Provider (Provider)</b>	An organisation with a Deed arrangement with the Australian Government to deliver Support Services through the Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery network – also referred to as a Provider.
<b>Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery Style Guide</b>	Provides the requirements for Providers in the production of marketing materials, including the use of the Commonwealth crest, Australian Apprenticeships logo and <i>real skills for real careers</i> tagline.
<b>Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN)</b>	Providers delivering apprenticeship Support Services on behalf of the department, prior to 1 July 2024.
<b>Australian Apprenticeship Support Services (Support Services)</b>	The suite of Support Services delivered to apprentices and their employers by Providers.
<b>Australian Apprenticeship Support Services 2024 – 2026 Deed (the Deed)</b>	The Deed of Agreement (Deed) between the Commonwealth of Australia and Providers for the delivery of Australian Apprenticeships Support Services.  Note: The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the department) has a joint Deed arrangement with the Northern Territory Government for the delivery of Support Services in this Service Region.
<b>Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program (AAIP)</b>	An Australian Government program administered by Providers, providing support to apprentices and employers for commencements and recommencements <b>prior to 1 July 2022</b> .

<b>Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System (Incentives System)</b>	<b>Commenced on 1 July 2022</b> , this Australian Government program is administered by Providers, designed to increase apprenticeship commencements and completions in priority occupations. It supports employers around Australia to fill skill shortages and offers direct training support payments to apprentices in priority occupations and replaces AAIP.
<b>Australian Apprenticeships Priority List (Priority List)</b>	A list of occupations with an apprenticeship pathway that have been assessed as experiencing current national shortage and/or projected future demand over the next 5 years. The list will be updated annually. More information on the Priority List is available at: <a href="http://www.dewr.gov.au/australian-apprenticeships/resources/about-australian-apprenticeship-priority-list">www.dewr.gov.au/australian-apprenticeships/resources/about-australian-apprenticeship-priority-list</a>
<b>Australian Apprenticeships Priority List (Priority List) – New Energy Subset</b>	Clean Energy qualifications identified with the symbol ‘❖’ within the Priority List.
<b>Australian Apprenticeships Website</b>	<a href="http://www.apprenticeships.gov.au">www.apprenticeships.gov.au</a>
<b>Australian Apprenticeships working towards Clean Energy occupations</b>	An Australian Apprentice who is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• undertaking a Cert III, IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma level qualification listed in the 2022 Australian Apprenticeship <a href="#">Priority List indicated as aligning to the Clean Energy Sector</a></li> <li>• training towards an occupation identified as a Clean Energy occupation in the <a href="#">Priority List</a></li> <li>• employed by an organisation in the Clean Energy Sector, with most of their work in Clean Energy</li> <li>• willing to sign a declaration stating their commitment to building their skills in the Clean Energy Sector</li> <li>• Australian Apprentices working towards Clean Energy occupations are not a Key Client Group cohort.</li> </ul>
<b>Australian Business Number (ABN)</b>	A unique identifier provided by the Australian Tax Office. An ABN enables businesses in Australia to deal with a range of government departments and agencies using an identification number.
<b>Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)</b>	The AQF is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.
<b>Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASbA)</b>	For the purpose of the Deed, this is an apprenticeship that is endorsed by the secondary school Principal (or their representative) or equivalent for non-secondary school education providers, as an integral part of the school program, which the apprentice is attending or attended. ASbAs undertaking a Certificate I level qualification are not eligible for Australian Government funding or payments under AAIP and the Incentives System.

<b>Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)</b>	<p>The national regulator for Australia’s vocational education and training sector. ASQA accredits courses and regulates training providers to enforce nationally approved quality standards.</p> <p>Complaints about an RTO’s quality of service or training can be made with ASQA. Anyone can lodge a complaint: students, training organisation personnel, employers, parents, industry personnel, or any other member of the community. Contact details are 1300 701 801 or go to <a href="http://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints">www.asqa.gov.au/complaints</a>.</p>
<b>Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements (BAC)</b>	<p>A wage subsidy that was available to eligible employers aimed at increasing commencements in apprenticeships.</p> <p>Employers who engaged an apprentice <b>between 5 October 2020 and 30 June 2022</b> could apply for a wage subsidy of 50 per cent of their apprentice or trainee’s gross wage paid, to a maximum of \$7,000 per quarter, for a 12-month period from the date of commencement.</p>
<b>Clean Energy (New Energy Apprenticeships Program)</b>	<p>Employment that undertakes activities principally motivated by the production of renewable energy, and/or by the design, construction and/or operation and maintenance of renewable energy infrastructure.</p>
<b>Clean Energy Pathway</b>	<p>The occupational outcome listed at Appendix A of the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List and identified as a Clean Energy occupation with the symbol ‘❖’.</p>
<b>Clean Energy Sector</b>	<p>Businesses that undertake activities principally motivated by the production of renewable energy, and/or by the design, construction and/or operation and maintenance of renewable energy infrastructure.</p>
<b>Commencement date</b>	<p>The date the apprenticeship commenced as specified in the Training Contract and confirmed by the relevant State or Territory Training Authority (STA).</p>
<b>Commonwealth</b>	<p>The Commonwealth of Australia and includes officers, delegates, employees, and agents of the Commonwealth of Australia.</p>
<b>Completing Apprenticeship Commencements (CAC)</b>	<p>A wage subsidy that complements the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements measure for commencements <b>between 5 October 2020 and 30 June 2022</b>, providing additional tapered financial support for BAC eligible apprentices who progress to a second and third year of training.</p>
<b>Contact Payment</b>	<p>Fee-for-Service for completing the scheduled Progress Contact and within the allowable Contact Timeframe.</p>
<b>Contact Point/Milestone</b>	<p>Time at which a Progress Contacts must be undertaken in order to receive Contact Payments – <i>refer section 2.4.6 of these Operating Guidelines</i>.</p>

<b>Contact Timeframe</b>	2 weeks either side of the relevant Contact Point as set out in the Contract Regime tables – <i>refer section 2.4.6 of these Operating Guidelines.</i>
<b>Contracted services</b>	Services purchased under the Deed between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Provider.
<b>Commonwealth Apprenticeship Programs</b>	The Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program, the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System, and Trade Support Loans (TSL)
<b>Commonwealth Apprenticeship Incentives Programs</b>	The Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program and the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System.
<b>Deed</b>	A binding agreement enforceable and executed in writing for the Australian Apprenticeship Support Services.
<b>Deed Period</b>	The period of the Australian Apprenticeship Support Services 2024 – 2026 Deed, that is, from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2026 inclusive.
<b>Delegate</b>	The decision-making authority for the purposes of delivering Australian Apprenticeship Support Services.
<b>Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the department)</b>	The Australian Government department that manages the Deeds.
<b>Disability Australian Apprentice Wage Support (DAAWS) <i>previously the Disabled Australian Apprentice Wage Support</i></b>	<p>A program of support for apprentices with disability, administered as part of the AAIP and Incentives System. This may involve off-the-job tutorial, mentor, and interpreter assistance.</p> <p>Employers and RTOs of apprentices with disability may be eligible to receive DAAWS as per the AAIP and the Incentives System Guidelines. The employer of an apprentice with a disability is entitled to choose whether to receive DAAWS or standard payments available under the Incentives System.</p>
<b>e-Lodgement</b>	<p>Electronic lodgement or authorisation of a Training Contract or claim for payments available under the AAIP and Incentives System. Training Contract and claims can be completed using desktop or tablet technologies.</p> <p>Providers enter details into the form via tablet, laptop or desktop technology.</p> <p>Once a Training Contract is completed, the information automatically transfers into ADMS. Providers then finalise Training Contracts in ADMS for submission to the STA.</p>
<b>Employer</b>	The legal employer of the apprentice as identified on the Training Contract.
<b>Employer choice</b>	Employers choose a Provider to deliver Support Services to their apprentices. In multi-Provider Service Regions, employers can choose to change their Provider at any time and may, engage a

	different Provider for each apprentice, where they have engaged more than one apprentice.
<b>Employer/s Requiring Support</b>	<p>Employers of apprentices where, based upon the information available, the proposed apprenticeship is considered 'at risk' of non-completion.</p> <p>Employers Requiring Support are businesses with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no/limited experience in employing apprentices</li> <li>• a history of poor retention/completion of apprentices</li> <li>• fewer than 5 employees.</li> </ul>
<b>Enhanced Services apprentice</b>	Newly commencing Key Client Group apprentices from 1 July 2024 and all Women in Male-Dominated Trades who commenced prior to 1 July 2024.
<b>Face-to-face contact</b>	For the purpose of the Deed and these Operating Guidelines, face-to-face contact means meeting in person with an individual, and contact undertaken via visual electronic platforms such as Teams or FaceTime.
<b>Fee-For-Service (FFS)</b>	Fees paid to Providers for satisfying Support Services requirements delivered as part of the Deed.
<b>Field Officers</b>	Providers must service their entire Service Region(s) through the presence of field officers and site(s) as nominated in their Deed. Field officers facilitate apprenticeship sign-ups between the employer and the apprentice, and are responsible for ensuring the apprenticeship is appropriate (refer 'Inappropriate sign-up' definition, below); and submitting the Training Contract with the STA.
<b>File note</b>	A record of actions and communication taken by a Provider in relation to an apprenticeship file. <i>Refer to section 6.3 of these Operating Guidelines – Apprenticeship file notes for information regarding acceptable file notes.</i>
<b>First Nations Australian Apprentice / Indigenous Apprentice / First Nations Person</b>	<p>Means an individual who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. is identified as such on the department's IT Systems; or</li> <li>2. is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent;</li> <li>3. identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander; and</li> <li>4. is accepted as such in the community in which the individual lives or has lived.</li> </ol>
<b>Fraud, Risk and Business Continuity Plans</b>	Plans developed and implemented by Providers, covering their role in delivering Support Services to apprentices and employers and administering the AAIP, Incentives System and Trade Support Loans (TSL).

	<p>Under the Australian Apprenticeship Support Services 2024–2026 Deed, Fraud, Risk and Business Continuity Plans should provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategies for identifying minimising and mitigating fraud</li> <li>• strategies for identifying, minimising and mitigating legal risks</li> <li>• strategies for identifying, minimising and mitigating other potential and actual risks regarding business operation.</li> </ul>
<b>General Services apprentice</b>	All apprentices who are not deemed to be an Enhanced Services apprentice (that is, those not in a Key Client Group), and Key Client Group apprentice (excluding Women in Male-Dominated Trades) whose original commencement was prior to 1 July 2024.
<b>Generalist Provider</b>	A Provider contracted to deliver apprenticeships services to all Australian Apprentices and employers in the Service Region(s).
<b>Group Training Organisation (GTO)</b>	An employment and training arrangement whereby an organisation employs apprentices, and then places them with 'host employers'.
<b>Inappropriate sign-up</b>	<p>A Training Contract that has been completed by a Provider, where the department subsequently determines that the apprenticeship is not suited to either, or both, the apprentice and/or employer. Sign-ups may be inappropriate for a number of reasons, some of which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sign-ups being undertaken in order to maximise fees for a Provider despite there being a low expectation of successful completion, or the employer/apprentice achieving a meaningful training outcome</li> <li>• sign-ups being undertaken where it appears the employer's primary motivation is to maximise their access to payments under the Incentives System</li> <li>• sign-ups being undertaken in qualifications that are not suitable for the employer's workplace, or for the occupational expectations of the apprentice</li> <li>• sign-ups being undertaken when the employer is not able to provide appropriate work-based training</li> <li>• undertaking sign-ups that do not meet STA mandated requirements</li> <li>• sign-ups being undertaken in a workplace environment that appears unsuitable for the training required to complete the apprenticeship</li> <li>• sign-ups being undertaken where it appears that the employer and/or apprentice do not intend to meet the requirements for the apprenticeship</li> <li>• the apprentice has not received Assessment Services, or been appropriately screened for suitability for an apprenticeship</li> <li>• the employer is not supportive of RTO training requirements and will not support the apprentice to complete their off-the-job apprenticeship requirements</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the individual indicates they are unable to undertake the required training due to disability, language barrier or another apparent reason.</li> </ul>
<b>Incentive System</b>	Refer to definition of 'Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System (Incentives System)' above.
<b>Key Client Group apprentices</b>	<p>Apprentices who may experience additional barriers to completing their apprenticeship, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>women in male-dominated trades</li> <li>First Nations Australian Apprentices</li> <li>apprentices with disability; and</li> <li>apprentices located in Remote Australia.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicator (KPI)</b>	A benchmark for measuring Providers' performance on delivering Support Services under the Deed.
<b>Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHA)</b>	A program of support to certain apprentices living away from home, administered under the AAIP and the Incentives System.
<b>Mentoring and Personal Support Service(s) Place</b>	One 12-month Mentoring and Personal Support Service delivered to an individual, encompassing at least 3 contacts – <i>refer section 2.3 of these Operating Guidelines.</i>
<b>Mentoring Service Period</b>	The 12-month period from the date of the first Mentoring and Personal Support Services contact.
<b>Milestone/Contact Point</b>	Time at which a Progress Contacts must be undertaken in order to receive Contact Payments – <i>refer section 5.1.3 of these Operating Guidelines.</i>
<b>Multi-region employer definition</b>	A multi-region employer is an employer who employs, or intends to employ, apprentices in more than one Service Region.
<b>National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement)</b>	The objective of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement) is to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians.
<b>National Code of Good Practice for Australian Apprenticeships</b>	Provides the obligations and expectations of apprentices and employers entering into a Training Contract.
<b>National Customer Service Line</b>	A support line for employers, apprentices and other parties, providing information, and escalating to resolve the concerns of callers. The number is <b>1800 020 108</b> from anywhere in Australia for the cost of a local call.
<b>New Energy Apprenticeships Program (Clean Energy)</b>	Apprenticeships that undertake activities principally motivated by the production of renewable energy, and/or by the design, construction and/or operation and maintenance of renewable energy infrastructure. The Australian Apprentice must be

	undertaking a qualification at the Certificate III or above level, in an occupation that is listed on the Australian Apprenticeship Priority List and identified as Clean Energy.
<b>Out Of Region servicing</b>	Support Services delivered by Providers to multi-region employers, where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers already provide Support Services to that employer in respect of apprentices outside of their Service Region(s)</li> <li>• the employer requests that Provider to provide services to them outside of their Service Region(s); and</li> <li>• the Provider's Contract Manager approves the Provider's delivery of Support Services to that employer outside of their Service Region(s).</li> </ul>
<b>Progress Contact</b>	Contact with an apprentice or employer for the purpose of providing information or addressing issues and problems that could influence a successful completion. Progress Contacts may be initiated by the Provider (via face-to-face, phone, or video chatting/conferencing), or via ADMS (email).  Providers must undertake contact in a private manner – for example, contact made through social media must be undertaken in a private forum (such as direct messaging) and not be placed on public facing areas.
<b>Provider</b>	An organisation contracted to deliver services under the Australian Apprenticeship Service Delivery network.
<b>Readiness Check/Readiness Check Tool</b>	A tool on the department's website ( <a href="http://www.apprenticeships.gov.au">www.apprenticeships.gov.au</a> ) to gauge the extent of an apprentice's LLND capability to determine any necessary Support Services and/or referrals to assist them to become apprenticeship ready, should that be the path they choose.
<b>Recommencement date</b>	The date confirmed by the relevant STA as the date the apprentice has commenced in an apprenticeship with the same or another employer, to continue working towards a previously incomplete apprenticeship.
<b>Regional</b>	An area classified as Regional, as determined by the <i>ABS Australian Statistical Geography Standard Edition 3</i> – relating to the apprentice's place of work.
<b>Registered Training Organisation (RTO)</b>	Training providers registered by ASQA (or the Victorian or Western Australian state regulator) to deliver Vocational Education and Training (VET).
<b>Registration date</b>	The date that the STA assigns a registration number for a Training Contract. The Registration date (STA approval date in NSW) is the date that Providers become eligible to claim the commencement Fee for Service subject to meeting other eligibility criteria.

<b>Retention rate</b>	A measure of the proportion of a commencing cohort that is either: a) still in-training on; or b) has successfully completed prior to a point in their apprenticeship (for example the twelve-month point from commencement).
<b>Remote</b>	An area classified as Remote, as determined by the <i>ABS Australian Statistical Geography Standard Edition 3</i> – relating to the apprentice’s place of work.
<b>School Engagement Plan</b>	Plan outlining a Provider’s schedule relating to school visits to promote apprenticeships/VET.
<b>Service Region</b>	<p>The geographical region for which the Provider has been engaged to deliver Australian Apprenticeship Support Services under the Deed. The Service Region is determined by the apprentice’s workplace address.</p> <p>When used in a geographical sense, includes the area in which Providers are contracted to provide Support Services.</p> <p>The Service Delivery network has 9 Service Regions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Australian Capital Territory (ACT)</li> <li>2. New South Wales</li> <li>3. Queensland (<i>including</i> Torres Strait Islands)</li> <li>4. South Australia</li> <li>5. Tasmania</li> <li>6. Victoria</li> <li>7. Perth and Surrounds Western Australia</li> <li>8. Outback Western Australia (SA4* <i>Outback North</i> and <i>Outback South</i>)</li> <li>9. Northern Territory.</li> </ol> <p><small>* ABS Australian Statistical Geography Standard 2021, Statistical Area Level 4</small></p>
<b>Service Specialisation Cohort</b>	<p>There are 3 Service Specialisation Cohorts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• women in male-dominated trades</li> <li>• First Nations Australian Apprentices</li> <li>• Australian Apprenticeships working towards Clean Energy occupations.</li> </ul>
<b>Site</b>	Physical place from where the Provider delivers Support Services.
<b>Sign-up</b>	Means when an apprentice and their employer, facilitated by a Provider (field officer), complete a Training Contract for submission to the relevant STA.
<b>Small to Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs)</b>	A business with up to 200 persons employed (as defined by the <i>Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Glossary</i> ).
<b>Special Claim</b>	A claim which does not meet the eligibility rules in ADMS, including Top Up Claims and those where a waiver has been approved ( <i>refer ‘waiver’ definition, further below in this table</i> ).

	An Applicant who is unable to access ADMS due to their inability to obtain a myGovID or account is <b>not</b> processed as a Special Claim.
<b>Specialist Provider</b>	An organisation contracted to deliver Support Services in a Service Region(s) only to one or more of the identified specialist cohorts of Australian Apprenticeships.
<b>Specialty Cohorts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Nations Australian Apprentices</li> <li>• women in male-dominated trades</li> <li>• Australian Apprenticeships working towards Clean Energy occupations.</li> </ul>
<b>State and Territory Training Authorities (STAs)</b>	The body in each State or Territory responsible for regulating apprenticeships in that State or Territory. Each STA participates in the formulation of national policy, planning and objectives, and promotes and implements the agreed policies and priorities within their jurisdiction.
<b>State and Territory Training Authority (STA) Registration Number</b>	The identification number assigned to Training Contracts by the STA (referred to as 'STA ID' in ADMS).
<b>State Contract Manager (Contract Manager)</b>	The employee of the department (state network) responsible for managing Deeds in a Service Region(s).
<b>Support Services</b>	Assessment, Mentoring and Personal Support, and Engagement and Apprenticeship Technical Support Services delivered by Providers to apprentices, their employers, and to prospective apprentices and employers.
<b>Trade Support Loans (TSL)</b>	The Trade Support Loans Program supports apprentices by making available a concessional, income contingent loan subject to meeting eligibility criteria. Refer to the <i>Trade Support Loans Program Guidelines</i> for guidance on qualification and payments.
<b>Trade Support Loans (TSL) Program Guidelines</b>	The Guidelines used to describe the criteria to assess the eligibility of apprentices for TSL.
<b>Training and Youth Internet Management System (TYIMS)</b>	The department's superseded IT system which supported the operation and management of Australian Apprenticeships; and was also used by the department to administer and manage previous contracts.  <b>Note:</b> TYIMS has been replaced by ADMS.
<b>Training Contract</b>	A formal Contract approved by the STA to establish the employment and training terms and conditions of the apprenticeship arrangement between an employer and apprentice. Training Contracts are regulated by STAs.
<b>Training Contract Identifier (Training Contract ID)</b>	A number assigned to each Training Contract created in ADMS.

<b>Transition period</b>	The period, if any, notified to a Provider in the Deed, where eligible apprentices are moved between Providers.
<b>Unit Price</b>	The Unit Price is the base figure specified in the Deed upon which Fees, payable for Support Services delivered by Providers, are calculated in relation to each apprenticeship.
<b>Visual electronic contact</b>	<p>A form of face-to-face contact, a contact may be undertaken using video conferencing or video chatting means. Products such as Teams or FaceTime can be used to facilitate these contacts. An in person face-to-face visit is the department's preferred method of contact.</p> <p>Video conferencing/video chatting contacts have all the same program and service requirements as an in person face-to-face visit.</p>
<b>Vocational Education and Training (VET)</b>	Education and training which aims to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competencies required in particular occupations, or more broadly, in the labour market.
<b>Waiver (relating to claims)</b>	Waivers may be granted when an application for payment is deemed ineligible, however exceptional circumstances apply. This can include where a timeframe for claiming a payment has been missed.
<b>Women in male-dominated trades</b>	An apprentice who identifies as female on their Training Contract and is undertaking an apprenticeship leading to an occupation in the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) Major Group 3, excluding occupations predominantly undertaken by women.