SCHOOL BASED POLICY UPDATE

BACKGROUND

A recent review by the office of the Queensland Training Ombudsman found widespread issues in school based traineeships in the sport and recreation industry. In addition to the ombudsman’s review the DETE regional network have been investigating school based training contracts in a range of qualifications prior to the registration or refusal to register the training contract. The majority of the identified issues involve inappropriate or insufficient employment arrangements.

Employment Arrangements

- Apprenticeships and Traineeships are employment based pathways towards a qualification.
- The employment must provide meaningful work which aligns to the qualification.
- The VETE Act 2000 states “the employer of an apprentice or trainee must provide, or arrange to provide, to the apprentice or trainee the facilities, range of work, supervision and training required under the training plan for the apprentice or trainee.”
- The main issues identified with employment have been identified in traineeships and currently these issues are particularly prevalent in school based traineeships.

School based traineeships and apprenticeships

- Current policy requires a commitment from the employer to provide 48 paid working days per 12 month period
- The work and/or training must have an impact on the school timetable
- The employment must provide a genuine work based experience for the school based trainee.
- The nominal duration of a school based training contract is double what is set for a full time training contract.
- Many of the training contracts where issues have been identified have a 2 year nominal duration for full time training contracts, this means as a school based the nominal term of the training contract is 4 years.
- Many school based traineeships are completed in less than 12 months and in some cases this is equating to a minimal time spent in the workplace, a significant number of these traineeships are in certificate 3 (and above) qualifications with nominal timeframes of 4 years or more.

It is not acceptable to have school based trainees or apprentices placed in a workplace but then effectively undertaking an institutional pathway towards the qualification, e.g.

- Placed in a training room in a workplace for 1 paid workday per week without client/staff interaction, this is not significantly different to attending an SRTO classroom and this does not meet the intent of an employment based pathway.
- Placed in a workplace that does not have the range of work or facilities required under the training plan. While the training package may allow for assessment to take place in a simulated environment the employment arrangements must still align to the qualification.

School based apprenticeships are normally commenced due to an interest in the industry and an intention to stay in the apprenticeship at the completion of school. School based traineeships are entered into for a variety of reasons:
QCE Points

Employer incentives

Trial an industry while at school

Longer term career pathway

The issues being identified have resulted in some major changes to the training contract registration process for school based traineeships, these changes were put in place over the last few months and remain current.

All school based traineeships in industries where issues have been identified are being reviewed by regional officers prior to the registration of, or the refusal to register, a training contract. If regional officers identify inadequate employment arrangements the training contract will be refused. This is having a delay on the registration process for these training contracts while regional officers investigate the individual arrangements.

As an SRTO there is a requirement to ensure there are appropriate employment arrangements in place, if an SRTO identifies issues relating to a training contract they must notify DETE.

From 1/1/2013 the policy for school based apprenticeships and traineeships will be changing, the key changes are as follows:

- Minimum of 50 paid working days per 12 month period

- For a school based trainee to complete in less than 12 months they must have had a minimum of 50 days paid employment in the workplace.

As with the current 48 day per 12 month commitment the 50 days per 12 months is the minimum requirement and school based apprentices and trainees can work more than the minimum by working weekends, school holidays, after school shifts, etc.

It is unlikely an apprenticeship would be completed before a student left school, in exceptional circumstances it may occur but would be reviewed by a DETE officer prior to being able to complete the apprenticeship.

A working day is defined as 7.6 hrs. (unless a greater figure is stipulated in the relevant industrial award)

To meet Queensland definitional requirements for school-based apprentice or trainee (SAT), a working day is calculated based on the equivalent full time hours in the relevant award, in most cases, 38 ordinary hours worked over a 5 day week where a day is equivalent to 7.6 hours.

The hours may be averaged over a 4 week period if required (minimum and maximum hours provided in any single day must comply with the relevant industrial award)

School based apprentices in Electrotechnology are required to have a minimum of 80 working days per 12 months and this requirement remains in place.

Key Points

- Apprenticeships and traineeships are employment based pathways towards a qualification.

- The employment must be meaningful and allow the school based apprentice or trainee the opportunity to gain a genuine work based experience.

- All parties have a responsibility to ensure the integrity of the traineeship and apprenticeship system, if there is an issue notify your local DETE office via Apprenticeships Info on 1800 210 210.