

Building EYSAC Capability for Trainees Project

Webinar 4: Valuing and supporting traineeships as an employer

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Introduction

Attainment of formal qualifications are a significant foundation for the organisation's workforce planning and development.

Supporting traineeships is helping to meet the staffing issues currently being experienced across Tasmania, including recruitment challenges. By upskilling the organisations own workforce from within, Discovery is working to meet its qualification requirements (number of Diploma and Degree trained educators) into the future.

The government provides a range of financial incentives to employers to employ trainees, but a learning and growth mindset can frame and drive a career with the employer beyond the traineeship.

Discovery, as an employer, is always concerned that trainees are suitable for the organisation, so pay attention to the probationary period, including whether the trainee will be able to commit to the requirements of a traineeship (including hours of work, study time and capability to complete tasks and assessments).

Discovery prefer the traineeship model (as opposed to self-funded learners), as it enables the organisation to have a clearer relationship with the RTO.

Probation

For new employees there is a probationary period for both starting work with the organisation and a probationary period for the traineeship. For an existing employee (beginning a traineeship to gain a Diploma qualification, there is only a probationary period for the traineeship (not employment).

Ongoing support is important

- Support mechanisms act as a 'safety net' for trainees
- Support is different for each trainee (therefor, relationship building and clear communication practices are critical)
- Room leaders/ workplace coaches can contribute by:
 - working to make trainees feel valued as team members
 - providing guidance and reassurance
 - ensuring that trainees have a voice and opportunities to contribute ideas
 - encouraging trainees to participate in the learning environment
 - helping trainees to understand their job roles and responsibilities, including helping them to reflect on how their work links back to their study (including demonstrating proficiency)
 - assisting trainees in finding information
 - paying attention to the 'cues' that trainees give in relation to their preferred learning approach (e.g., "show me", lists of tasks and instructions – visual learner, "tell me", spoken explanations and instructions – auditory learner, "let me try", experimental and hands on – tactile learner)
 - optimising time with trainees. Being familiar with assessment documents and units of study currently being undertaken can lead to focussed coaching linked to the desired outcomes of each unit of competency.
- Although organisational approaches are important, it's the service level support, especially that provided by workplace coaches and mentors that drives the success of traineeships.
- If trainees are experiencing difficulties or personal issues, they can be supported by agreeing to 'park' the study for a reasonable period of time.

Checking in

- Employers are required to check in on a regular basis. This can include seeking information on class attendance, completion of tasks and assessment (e.g., statement of results). However, informal check-ins enable the employer to effectively support each trainee. Workplace coaches and mentors have a clear role to play here.

Challenges and solutions

Discovery Early Learning centres developed a 'training agreement' some time ago. This functions to make clear the obligations of Discovery and the trainee. To a great degree, this serves to mitigate many of the challenges that may appear during a traineeship.

Discovery is currently developing an 'RTO agreement' that will outline what Discovery is willing to commit and what will be expected of the RTO.