



**Government of Western Australia  
Department of Training  
and Workforce Development**

**TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION ALLOWANCE (TAA) POLICY  
FOR APPRENTICESHIPS**

**(INCLUDING TRAINEESHIPS, CADETSHIPS AND INTERNSHIPS)**

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VERSION 5.1

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## 1 POLICY STATEMENT

The Department of Training and Workforce Development (the Department) will provide financial assistance to support off the job training being delivered to apprentices (including trainees, cadets and interns) who are, or would normally be, required to travel long distances to attend off the job training.

Through the *Travel and Accommodation Allowance (TAA) Policy for Apprenticeships* financial assistance will be provided to assist with the travel and accommodation expenses of:

- apprentices required to travel long distances to attend off the job training; and
- training provider lecturers who travel to deliver off the job training to a group of apprentices so that the apprentices' travel to attend the off the job training is minimised.

## 2 SCOPE

This policy applies where off the job training is funded by the Department to:

- apprentices who are Western Australian residents required to attend off the job training;
- training providers, including State Training Providers (formerly TAFE colleges) and private training providers required to deliver off the job training;
- employers who are required under a federal *Modern Award* to pay for their apprentice's travel and/or accommodation costs to attend off the job training; and
- other departmental staff processing TAA applications and claims.

## 3 PRINCIPLES

The *TAA Policy for Apprenticeships* is based on the following principles:

- When an apprentice is required to travel long distances to attend off the job training and their employer does not pay for their travel and/or accommodation costs, the apprentice should be provided with financial assistance to contribute towards these costs.
- When an apprentice is required to travel long distances to attend off the job training and their employer pays for their travel and/or accommodation costs as required under a federal *Modern Award*, the employer should be provided with financial assistance to contribute towards these costs.
- For reasons of safety, wherever practicable an apprentice should travel the shortest distance to attend off the job training.

- When it is academically beneficial and cost effective, training providers should be assisted to travel to deliver off the job training to groups of apprentices so that the apprentices' travel to attend the off the job training is minimised.

#### 4 BACKGROUND

Many apprentices, particularly those living in regional and remote areas who undertake traditional trades, are required to travel long distances and to live away from home to attend off the job training. As specified under the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*, when an employer enters into a training contract with an apprentice, the employer agrees to release the apprentice to be trained in accordance with the contract; and any time spent in attending training is considered time spent working for the employer.

Since the mid 1970s the State Government has provided financial assistance, to apprentices who have had to live away from home while attending off the job training. Initially an accommodation allowance was provided and then in 1998 a travel allowance was also introduced to provide additional financial assistance to apprentices required to travel to attend off the job training.

In 2002 the accommodation and travel allowances were combined to form the *Travel and Accommodation Allowance (TAA)*. The TAA was offered as assistance and was not designed to fully reimburse costs.

Since 2002 the TAA has been reviewed a number of times. The most recent review was conducted in 2011 and the TAA has now been extended to provide financial assistance to:

- training providers to enable lecturers to travel to deliver off the job training to a group of apprentices so that the apprentices' travel to attend off the job training is minimised; and
- employers who under a federal *Modern Award* are required to pay their apprentice's travel and/or accommodation costs when they are required to travel long distances to attend off the job training.

The TAA has been renamed the *TAA Policy for Apprenticeships* to reflect the expansion of the policy.

#### 5 PROCEDURES

Explanations of the terms used in this policy are provided in the glossary in Appendix A. The policy should be read in conjunction with the *Procedures for the TAA Policy for Apprenticeships*.

This policy applies to travel and accommodation undertaken by apprentices and training provider lecturers from October 2012.

The Department reserves the right to refuse payment of any claim not compliant with this policy.

## 5.1 APPRENTICES TRAVELLING TO ATTEND OFF THE JOB TRAINING

### 5.1.1 APPRENTICE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

An apprentice is eligible to claim a Travel and Accommodation Allowance (TAA) when:

- (i) they have a training status of Active, Suspended or Out of Contract on the Department's Training Records System (TRS) at the time of undertaking off the job training (including the scheduled Capstone Assessment for Electrical trades);
- (ii) they are enrolled with a training provider for the period they are claiming TAA;
- (iii) the Department funds the off the job training;
- (iv) they have a residential address within Western Australia;
- (v) they are required to travel 71 kilometres or more (round trip) from their residential address to attend the closest training venue of all training providers able to deliver the off the job training; and
- (vi) they are the only apprentice claiming travel allowance if travelling in the same private vehicle to and/or from the training venue with one or more other apprentices (only one apprentice per private vehicle is entitled to claim the travel allowance).

An apprentice is ineligible for this allowance when:

- (vii) the off the job training is conducted at an apprentice's place of employment;
- (viii) they travel 1200 kilometres or more (round trip) to attend Day Release training;
- (ix) they are paid a travel and/or accommodation allowance by their employer while attending off the job training; or
- (x) their employer incurs the total cost of the travel and/or accommodation.

### 5.1.2 MINIMUM DISTANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPRENTICE TRAVEL

To claim assistance the minimum round trip distance an apprentice must travel from their residential address to the **closest** training venue of all training providers able to deliver the off the job training is:

- 71 kilometres or more for travel allowance;
- 200 kilometres or more for accommodation allowance; and
- 1200 kilometres or more for airfare travel.

Note: Distances are measured by Microsoft Virtual Earth (Bing Maps).

The closest training provider is the one that has a training venue located the shortest possible road distance from the apprentice's residential address (regardless of the method of transport used to get to the training venue) **or**:

- where an apprentice travels by bus or train to the training venue (71 to 1199 kilometres round trip) — the one with a training venue accessed by the most direct bus or train route from the apprentice's residential address; or
- where an apprentice travels by plane (1200 kilometres or more round trip) — the one with a training venue accessed by the most direct plane route from the apprentice's residential address.

### 5.1.3 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Exceptional circumstances outside the normal eligibility criteria can arise and will be considered by the Department on a case by case basis.

The applicant (the employer or apprentice) must apply in writing (by letter or email) to the Department fully outlining the reasons for the request for exceptional circumstances to claim TAA outside the normal eligibility criteria.

Approval must be provided by the Department prior to the relevant travel occurring.

Approval for an exceptional circumstance is only valid for an agreed duration. If the exceptional circumstance is ongoing, approval will only be given until the end of the current academic year. Approval will need to be sought for any continuation of a particular exceptional circumstance beyond these dates.

### 5.1.4 TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION ENTITLEMENTS FOR APPRENTICES

The closest training provider does not have to be chosen to deliver the off the job training. However, an apprentice is only entitled to TAA calculated on the basis that they attended the closest training provider, regardless of the actual distance travelled, unless exceptional circumstances were approved.

An apprentice will only be provided with financial assistance to attend off the job training interstate where there is no training provider scoped and able to deliver the qualification in Western Australia.

An apprentice is entitled to claim the following based on the round trip distance travelled to the closest training provider:

- less than 71 kilometres – **no assistance**;
- between 71 and 199 kilometres - **travel allowance only**; and
- 200 kilometres or more - **travel and accommodation allowance**.

The **travel allowance** an apprentice is eligible to claim based on the round trip distance travelled is:

- between 71 and 1199 kilometres - private transport allowance or a return fare for bus or train travel; and

- 1200 kilometres or more - a return economy airfare.

An Airport Transfer Subsidy is also payable (see Appendix A in the *Procedures for the TAA Policy for Apprenticeships*).

If an apprentice lives in a regional or remote location and travels 71 kilometres or more (round trip) from their residential address to the airport they are also eligible for travel allowance for travel by private transport, bus or train from their residential address to the airport. The apprentice will also be entitled to the allowance on their return trip from the airport to their residential address.

If an apprentice intends to travel by private vehicle when they are eligible to travel by plane, they must inform the training provider before travel arrangements are made. They can be paid a reduced travel allowance not exceeding the value of a return economy airfare.

If an apprentice lives in a regional or remote area and is attending a training provider in the metropolitan area and arrangements are made for the lecturer to travel to the area to deliver off the job training, the apprentice is not eligible to claim TAA to travel to the metropolitan area to attend the off the job training.

#### DAY RELEASE ATTENDANCE

An apprentice is eligible for one return trip for each off the job training day attended for Day Release training when the distance travelled is between 71 kilometres and 1199 kilometres (round trip).

The exception to this is an apprentice undertaking the scheduled Capstone Assessment for Electrical Trades. They are eligible for TAA if they travel 71 kilometres or more (round trip) to undertake the assessment.

#### BLOCK RELEASE ATTENDANCE

An apprentice is usually only entitled to accommodation allowance when attending block release off the job training.

An apprentice is:

- Eligible for one return trip per scheduled block release.
- Responsible for the travel cost if they choose to return to their usual residence on the weekend during a block.
- Ineligible to receive the respective night's accommodation allowance if they take any unauthorised absence from the approved off the job training.

- Eligible to claim the day either side of the attendance period to assist travelling to their scheduled Block Release program. Apprentices unable to obtain flights or public transport within one day of the attendance period are permitted to claim accommodation for additional nights, subject to Departmental approval.

Travel allowance is not payable for travel between the temporary accommodation and the training venue.

Wherever possible an apprentice attending block release off the job training should travel by public transport, especially when travelling 1200 kilometres or more on a round trip.

#### 5.1.5 EMPLOYER ELIGIBILITY AND ENTITLEMENT

An employer is eligible to claim TAA when:

- they have paid their apprentice's travel and/or accommodation costs to attend off the job training as required under a federal *Modern Award*;
- their apprentice meets eligibility criteria (i) to (vi) in Section 5.1.1 and their apprentice would not be ineligible due to (vii) and (viii) in Section 5.1.1; **and**
- their apprentice has not received TAA.

An employer is entitled to claim the same TAA their apprentice would have been entitled to if the employer had not paid their travel and/or accommodation costs or provided an allowance for these costs.

The entitlement of eligible employers varies depending on the method of transport used by an apprentice (based on their eligibility requirements).

Where the apprentice travels by:

- private transport and the employer pays the apprentice a travel allowance, the employer is eligible to claim the travel allowance rate payable to an apprentice (see Appendix A of the *Procedures for the TAA Policy for Apprenticeships*);
- bus or train and the employer pays the apprentice's fare, the employer is eligible to claim the cost of the fare; or
- plane and the employer arranges for the travel to be booked and paid for by the apprentice's training provider, the Department will reimburse the training provider.

The maximum accommodation allowance that an employer can claim is the accommodation allowance rate payable to apprentices (see Appendix A of the *Procedures for the TAA Policy for Apprenticeships*).



The Department will not reimburse an employer more than the employer paid for the apprentice's travel and/or accommodation expenses.

Employer claims must be submitted with supporting documentation.

#### 5.1.6 TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY AND ENTITLEMENT

When an apprentice travels by plane (subject to eligibility criteria and entitlements based on distance travelled) to attend off the job training the training provider is required to arrange and pay for the transport from the apprentice's residential address to the vicinity of the training venue. The training provider is eligible to claim TAA for the travel purchased.

If the apprentice attends the closest training provider able to deliver the off the job training, the Department will reimburse the training provider the full transport costs.

The Department will only reimburse a training provider for travel purchased for eligible apprentices (see Section 5.1.1) in accordance with their entitlement (see Section 5.1.4).

A training provider is not usually entitled to claim reimbursement for an apprentice's accommodation costs.

Training provider claims must be submitted with supporting documentation.

#### 5.1.7 APPRENTICES NOT ATTENDING THE CLOSEST TRAINING PROVIDER

If airfares or public transport are purchased for an apprentice to attend a training provider that is not the closest training provider and exceptional circumstances were not approved, the purchase cost will be compared to the estimated cost of travel to the closest training provider. The lesser amount will be the travel allowance payable.

If any employer chooses not to enrol an apprentice with the closest training provider and exceptional circumstances have not been approved, and the training provider arranges the apprentice's transport, the training provider is not expected to pay for transport costs for which it will not be fully reimbursed. In such cases, costs incurred are the responsibility of the employer.

#### 5.1.8 CANCELLATIONS AND RESCHEDULED TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Where an apprentice, training provider or employer needs to reschedule travel arrangements, thereby incurring additional cost(s), exceptional circumstances must be requested and approved on a case-by-case basis (see 5.1.3).

If an apprentice travels by plane, bus or train and misses a booked journey without a valid reason, the Department will not pay for another trip.

### 5.1.9 SUBMITTING CLAIMS

All claim forms and supporting documentation must be submitted **within 60 days** of the completion of an apprentice's off the job training or attendance period. Claims that do not meet the 60 day timeframe will not be paid unless the applicant can demonstrate exceptional circumstances.

## 5.2 LECTURERS TRAVELLING TO DELIVER OFF THE JOB TRAINING

### 5.2.1 TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY

A training provider is eligible to apply for financial assistance for lecturers to travel to deliver block release off the job training to a group of apprentices when:

- (i) the arrangement is academically beneficial for the apprentices;
- (ii) the training is specified to be delivered at the training provider's premises in the apprentice's training plan;
- (iii) at least one of the apprentices attending the training would have been eligible for TAA (meets eligibility criteria (i) to (vi) in Section 5.1.1) if the lecturer had not travelled to deliver the off the job training;
- (iv) the amount payable to the training provider will not exceed the total TAA entitlement that would have been payable to the apprentices receiving the training (see Sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.4);
- (v) all parties to the training contract agree to the arrangement; **and**
- (vi) the training provider submits a *TAA–Lecturer Application Form* which is approved by the Department prior to the training being delivered.

To be eligible for this allowance a training provider must meet **all** of these eligibility criteria.

A training provider is ineligible for this allowance when they receive departmental funding at a regional rate to deliver training in the region.

### 5.2.2 TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION ENTITLEMENT FOR LECTURERS

A training provider is only eligible to apply for financial assistance for their lecturers' travel and accommodation costs associated with delivering off the job training to a group of apprentices.

### 5.2.3 CANCELLATIONS AND RESCHEDULED TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Where a training provider needs to reschedule travel arrangements, thereby incurring additional cost(s), exceptional circumstances must be requested and approved on a case-by-case basis (see 5.1.3).

#### 5.2.4 SUBMITTING CLAIMS

A training provider must submit their claim and supporting documentation for reimbursement **within 60 days** of completion of the training. Claims that do not meet the 60 day timeframe will not be paid unless the applicant can demonstrate exceptional circumstances.

### 6 RELATED POLICIES AND OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

*Apprenticeship Policy*

*Guidelines for assessing competence in VET 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (2013)*

*Procedures for the Travel and Accommodation Allowance (TAA) Policy for Apprenticeships*

*User Choice in Western Australia*

*Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Public Schools Program Funding Practices 2014*

### 7 RELEVANT LEGISLATION OR AUTHORITY

*Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013*

*AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration, Version 2013*

*Financial Management Act 2006*

*Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*

*Vocational Education and Training (General) Regulations 2009*

### 8 REVIEW DATE

21 September 2017

### 9 CONTACT INFORMATION

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Apprentice** — a person aged 15 years or more who is undertaking an approved apprenticeship, traineeship, cadetship or internship that leads to a nationally recognised qualification under a training contract. This term refers to apprentices, trainees, cadets and interns, unless specified otherwise.

**Apprenticeship** — a structured employment based training program that leads to apprentices gaining a nationally recognised qualification. Apprenticeships (including apprenticeships, traineeships, cadetships and internships) may be full time, part time or school based.

**Block release** — a scheduled period of continual attendance at the training provider's premises which is usually of two weeks duration or as specified in an apprentice's training plan.

**Closest training provider** — the training provider able to deliver the off the job training which has a training venue located the shortest possible road distance from the apprentice's residential address (regardless of the method of transport used to get to the training venue) **or**:

- where an apprentice travels by bus or train to the training venue (71 to 1199 kilometres round trip) — the one with a training venue accessed by the most direct bus or train route from the apprentice's residential address; **or**
- where an apprentice travels by plane (1200 kilometres or more round trip) — the one with a training venue accessed by the most direct plane route from the apprentice's residential address.

**Day release** — a scheduled attendance pattern where an apprentice attends the training venue one day per week/fortnight or as specified in the apprentice's training plan.

**Distance travelled** — the total number of kilometres travelled by an apprentice from their residential address to the training venue of the closest training provider. For the payment of allowances the distance travelled is measured by Microsoft Virtual Earth.

**Employer** — an apprentice's employer.

**Exceptional circumstances** — situations outside the normal eligibility criteria that must be approved (in writing) in order for payment to be made. An application for exceptional circumstances must be made, and approved, prior to the relevant travel taking place.

**Lecturer** — the lecturer employed by a training provider to deliver off the job training to apprentices.

**Modern Awards** — the system of modern awards created by the Commonwealth Government's award modernisation process which operate in conjunction with the national workplace relations system. Modern Awards established one set of minimum conditions for employers and employees across Australia who work in the same industries and occupations.

**Off the job training** — the approved training specified in an apprentice's training plan that is to take place at the training provider's premises.

**Private training provider (PTP)** — refer to definition for training provider.

**Private vehicles** — do not include company cars.

**Residential address** — an apprentice's usual place of residence from which they travel to work each day. It is not usually a work site address. For Fly In Fly Out apprentices the residential address cannot be a worksite address. The apprentice's residential address must be recorded on the Department's Training Records System (TRS).

**State Training Provider (STP)** — a public training provider (formerly known as a TAFE college), refer to definition for training provider.

**Training plan** — outlines the training delivery and assessment strategy to be undertaken throughout an apprenticeship training contract. It is developed by the training provider in accordance with the *Vocational and Training Act 1996* and the *Vocational Education and Training (General) Regulations 2009*; and in negotiation with the parties to the training contract.

**Training provider** — a state (STP) or private (PTP) training organisation registered by a state or territory recognition authority to deliver training and/or conduct assessments and issue nationally recognised qualifications in accordance with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

For the purpose of this policy, the term "training provider" refers specifically to a training provider contracted by the Department to deliver the approved training specified in an apprentice's training plan.

**Training Records System (TRS)** — the Department's apprenticeship administrative management information system.

**Training status** — the status of an apprentice's training contract.

'Active' — the training contract is active and the apprentice is currently employed and attending off the job training. This includes apprentices who are on probation.

'Cancelled' — the training contract ceases during the nominal term (after the probationary period) for any reason permitted under the *Vocational and Training Act 1996*, before a successful outcome (completion) is achieved.

*'Out of contract'* — an apprentice is no longer in a training contract due to cancellation and is seeking an employer to continue their training and they are placed on the "Out of Contract" Register. Those on the register may continue off the job training.

*'Suspended'* — the training contract has been temporarily suspended and the apprentice may or may not be attending off the job training.

***Training venue*** — the actual location of the training provider's premises or temporary location where the approved off the job training is conducted.