

Travel and Accommodation Assistance

for apprentices & trainees in NSW



Education
& Training
State Training Services

Financial assistance is available to eligible apprentices and trainees in NSW to assist in meeting some of the costs associated with training and to help maintain the traineeship or apprenticeship.

Assistance is available to:

- Offset some of the costs incurred for travel and accommodation related to class room based, off-the-job training with a registered training provider as required under the terms of the apprenticeship or traineeship; and/or
- Meet some of the costs incurred by unemployed apprentices or trainees in identified skill shortage areas with removal and rental expenses, where there is a need to relocate in order to recommence the apprenticeship or traineeship with a new employer.

Travel and Accommodation Costs

Assistance is paid to apprentices and trainees who are:

- required to travel at least 120km (return trip) to attend class based, off-the-job training; and
- need to stay overnight to attend.



Eligibility

Generally, all NSW-registered apprentices and new entrant trainees who undertake a return journey of at least 120km to attend approved off-the-job training are eligible to claim assistance. There are no subsidies for existing worker trainees. Any STS Office can advise on eligibility to claim the allowance.

To qualify for financial assistance to attend off-the-job training all of the following conditions must be satisfied:

- the apprentice or new entrant trainee must be registered under the *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001*, and
- the place of employment is in NSW, and
- the return journey from the usual place of residence to the off-the-job training location is at least 120km.

Financial assistance to attend off-the-job training has two components:

- travel allowance, and
- an accommodation allowance

Payment will comprise a travel allowance for a single return trip, plus the accommodation allowance for each night between consecutive training days.

Travel Allowance

Payment covers the number of kilometres travelled from the usual place of residence to the off-the-job training location and return.

The shortest most practicable road route will be used to determine eligibility for travel allowances. For this purpose *Whereis* or *Google Maps* distance information will be used as the basis in the calculation of entitlement.

The Commissioner for Vocational Training, or delegate, may exercise discretion to vary this distance where there is evidence that the route chosen was the shortest practicable route in the circumstances because of weather, road works, or other temporary factor, etc.

Exceptions

- Apprentices and trainees approved to receive the **Commonwealth's Living Away From Home Allowance** (LAFHA) may only apply for travel from the 'away from home' address.
- Apprentices and trainees whose journey from home to the off-the-job training location falls within the **NSW City Rail area** are generally not eligible unless application is made and the Commissioner or delegate considers it is unreasonable in the circumstances to expect the journey to be made by rail. Such applications must be submitted with a Signed Statement from the claimant setting out the reasons why the application should be approved. Any approval



granted is valid for the calendar year. This Statement must be endorsed as correct by the employer. The City Rail area covers the following postcodes: 2000-2304, 2320, 2322-2323, 2500-2535, 2541, 2560-2562, 2564-2567, 2570, 2747, 2750, 2753, 2755-2757, 2759-2774, 2776-2786.

- For **single day attendance**, the travel allowance **ONLY** may be claimed for each off-the-job training day. Apprentices and trainees attending training extending over several consecutive days who wish to travel home every day may receive travel allowance only for each trip, but the amount paid for each day's travel will be capped at an amount equivalent to the sum payable under the accommodation allowance.

Accommodation Allowance

Is generally payable for each night between consecutive training days.

Exceptions

- The accommodation allowance may be paid for a **night before** the date on which a training block commences,

or on the **last day** of a training block where it is unreasonable to expect an apprentice or trainee to travel to or from home on that day. Applications must be submitted with a Signed Statement setting out the reasons why the application should be approved. This Statement must also be endorsed as correct by the employer. Approvals are valid for the calendar year.

- Where training extends from one week to another, the apprentice or trainee will be eligible to receive the accommodation allowance for all nights spent away from home (including weekend nights). If the apprentice or trainee returns home for the weekend, the claim will be assessed as if each week is a distinct training block.

Special Circumstances

- Travel between **Bathurst and Orange** (110 km allowance) has been established as a special case for which off-the-job training assistance will be provided.
- **Lord Howe Island residents** who attend training on the mainland are reimbursed for a return economy airfare in addition to an accommodation allowance and travel allowance to and from the airport.
- Where **temporary exceptional or unusual circumstances** apply (e.g. road closure due to flooding, family crisis, etc) resulting in additional travel or additional nights away

from home, claims for additional payments may be lodged. Reasons for such claims must be included with the application together with any supporting evidence. Claims will be assessed by the Commissioner or delegate on a case by case basis.

- Some RTOs may require apprentices or trainees to participate in **interstate or overseas competitions** as part of the assessment process. Travel and accommodation support for these competitions is not available as the competition is not a mandatory requirement of the apprenticeship or traineeship under the relevant Vocational Training Order.



Relocation and Rental Expenses

Financial assistance may be paid to apprentices and trainees who are:

- registered with the Continuing Apprentices Placement Service (CAPS), and
- who need to relocate to continue their apprenticeship or traineeship with a new employer.

Eligibility

To qualify for assistance the following conditions must be satisfied:

- The apprentice or trainee must be registered in NSW, unemployed, and wishing to continue their apprenticeship or traineeship with a new employer, and
 - The unemployed apprentice or trainee must also be registered with CAPS, and
 - The apprentice or trainee must be preparing to continue their apprenticeship or traineeship with an identified new employer and the new employer's training address must be in NSW. For apprentices and trainees who work in multiple locations, those locations must be predominantly in NSW, and
 - The new employer's training address must be more than 60km from the apprentice or trainee's previous place of residence, and
 - The apprentice or a trainee is in an identified skills shortage industry.
- Apprentices and trainees employed by a **Group Training Organisation** who need to relocate in order to take up a position with another host employer may be eligible if it can be established that there were no alternative employers or host employers in the town or region where the apprentice or trainee lived.
 - An unemployed NSW apprentice or trainee who has **moved interstate** may be eligible provided they remain registered as an apprentice or trainee in NSW.
 - Unemployed apprentices and new-entrant trainees whose NSW training contract is currently cancelled or suspended and are **yet to identify a new employer** (but can demonstrate that they are actively seeking a position with another employer) and are continuing their off-the-job training, are also eligible.

Exceptions

- Unemployed apprentices and trainees, registered in **another State or Territory**, may also be eligible if they supply an *Extract of Service* from the relevant State Training Authority confirming details of their training arrangement and its current status.



Financial assistance has two components:

- removal cost reimbursement, and
- rental and bond reimbursement allowance

The relocation allowance

The allowance is a payment to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses for the cost of moving house from a former residence to a new location.

The rental assistance allowance

Covers the costs of a rental bond (equivalent to a maximum of four weeks rent) and two weeks rent in advance and will be paid after the new training contract has been approved and registered or an existing contract has been transferred.

In the case of trainee apprentices, the allowances are payable after approval or 13 weeks after commencement with the new employer, whichever is the later. Applications for early payment on the grounds of hardship or special circumstances will be considered.

Evidence of removal and rental expenses must be provided before these allowances can be paid.

Setting of Allowances

The level of financial assistance may vary. For current information regarding rates contact any of the numbers listed below.

Lodging Claims

Claims for travel and accommodation assistance to attend off-the-job training for the previous year must be submitted by 30 June in the year following the year of travel. Claims for expenses prior to the previous year will not be considered.

Claims for relocation and rental assistance must be submitted within six months of the commencement date of the new training contract, or within six months of the transfer date.



Application Forms

Applications for assistance must be made on the appropriate form. Forms can be obtained from any State Training Services' Office, or from the STS website at www.training.nsw.gov.au

As at 1 April 2009 the rates of assistance are:

Travel allowance:	\$0.12 per kilometre
Accommodation allowance:	\$28.00 per day
Relocation allowance:	A one-off payment based on total actual costs up to a maximum of \$2,500

More Information

To contact your nearest State Training Services' Office for any inquiry relating to apprenticeships and traineeships please call 13 28 11.

For inquiries regarding the **travel and accommodation allowance**

call 1300 533 470 or
email: vtas@det.nsw.edu.au

For inquiries regarding the **relocation and rental allowances**

call 9266 8569 or
email: caps@det.nsw.edu.au



As the ATO recognises these payments as assessable income, apprentices and trainees are able to claim a tax deduction in respect of the expenses incurred to attend this training.

Apprentices and trainees can claim deductions for travel to and from the place of education, overnight accommodation, meals and incidentals.

Where the apprentice or trainee uses a private vehicle, travel expenses may be claimed between:

- home and place of education
- place of education and home
- work and place of education, and
- place of education and work.

In some circumstances only the first leg of each trip is deductible.

Taxation

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has advised that accommodation and travel payments made under the Vocational Training Assistance Scheme (VTAS) are considered assessable income and should be included in the taxation returns of apprentices and trainees.

The Department is not required to withhold tax from these payments, nor to provide payment summaries. However, recipients should retain the payment advices they receive to substantiate income included in taxation returns.

- If you travel from your home to your place of education and then to work, then you can only claim expenses between your home and your place of education.
- If you travel from your work to your place of education and then to home, then you can only claim expenses between your work and your place of education.

Contact the Australian Taxation Office for further information.

