



# Trade Skills Recognition in NSW

## Introduction

If you have trade skills and experience but have never completed an apprenticeship or obtained formal qualifications in Australia, you can apply to the NSW Vocational Training Tribunal (VTT) to have your trade skills assessed. You can do this whether you have gained your trade skills through formal training or on-the-job experience either in Australia or overseas.

If your application is successful you will be formally recognised as a tradesperson and issued with a trade certificate.

Recognition in this way is supported by the Commonwealth and State governments, employers, unions and training providers.

## NSW Vocational Training Tribunal

The NSW Vocational Training Tribunal (VTT) consists of representatives from industry, registered training organisations and the NSW Commissioner for Vocational Training.

The VTT considers applications for recognition of trade qualifications in accordance with the provisions of the NSW Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001.

The VTT is serviced by staff of State Training Services of the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET), which is the State Training Authority in New South Wales.

## List of trades

Applications for trade skills recognition can be made in any trade currently approved in New South Wales or in a repealed trade under some circumstances.

The list of trades, including a brief description of the duties and work associated with each trade is available on the State Training Services website at:

[https://www.training.nsw.gov.au/skills\\_recognition/trade\\_recognition/trade\\_list/index.html](https://www.training.nsw.gov.au/skills_recognition/trade_recognition/trade_list/index.html)

## Benefits of trade skills recognition

Trade skills recognition is beneficial in the following circumstances.

- **If you are unemployed**, your chances of finding a job can improve, because a trade certificate shows employers that you have the skills to do the job. Some employers only employ people with a trade certificate.
- **If you want to obtain a promotion or a better job**, a trade certificate can increase your opportunities. Certified tradespeople are generally paid more than people who don't have a trade certificate.

- **If you want to undertake further education in your trade**, a trade certificate may help you gain entry to a course. It may also help you obtain advanced standing so that you can complete the course more quickly.

## Who can apply

If you can demonstrate that you are adequately trained in a trade you can apply to the VTT to have your trade skills recognised. You can do this whether you have gained your trade skills experience in Australia or overseas.

You must be:

- living in NSW or intending to work in NSW,
- able to provide evidence supporting employment in the full scope of work associated with the trade,
- able to provide evidence to demonstrate how you developed your trade skills and knowledge,

## Skills and knowledge you are required to outline

Applicants need to demonstrate both underpinning knowledge and trade skills associated with a particular trade vocation.

**Underpinning knowledge** is a correct understanding of relevant information to ensure a task is performed to acceptable trade practice.

**Trade skills** are the ability to perform trade to acceptable trade practice.

This might include the ability to:

- read and respond to work instructions, specifications and technical drawings,
- correctly use and application of products,
- select and use appropriate materials, tools, machines and equipment to acceptable trade practice,
- correctly use and application of tools, and measuring instruments.
- plan, set out, lay out and undertake work tasks associated with a trade occupation to acceptable trade practice.
- diagnose and correct faults or undertake repairs to acceptable trade practice.
- create or produce trade products and services to in accordance with acceptable trade practice.
- carry out trade work independently.
- supervise and impart trade skills and knowledge to other staff, including apprentices.

## Application process

To apply to have your trade skills recognised you need to:

- obtain an application form online from the VTT or your nearest State Training Services (STS) regional centre
- fill in the application form
- attach certified photocopies of the required documents (as explained later)
- attach two passport-size photos of yourself, taken within the past six months and signed on the back with your normal signature
- enclose the application fee
- deliver your application to any STS regional centre or deliver or post it to the VTT.

The addresses of the STS centres and the VTT are listed in the contacts section.

## Documentary evidence needed to support your application

The VTT relies on documentary evidence to assess your application. Therefore, it is important that you complete the application form carefully and attach to it certified photocopies of all relevant documents.

If you are unable to obtain information to support your application you will need to explain this in a statutory declaration.

Examples of relevant documents include:

- work related references from employers detailing the nature of trade work and the duration of employment in the trade (references must be on employers letterhead signed and dated).
- evidence of any periods of self employment in the trade (see information below regarding advice on the presentation of evidence concerning self employment).
- any qualifications you hold relevant to the trade you are applying for (including a transcript outlining course subjects completed)
- evidence supporting the duration of employment and training in the trade to date.

## Certification of photocopies

Photocopies of any documents attached to your application must be certified as complete and accurate copies.

If you **deliver** your application in person to the VTT or to a STS regional centre, take your original documents and a photocopy of each of them with you. One of our staff can certify the copies and give you back your originals.

If you **post** your application to the VTT, you will need to include photocopies certified by a justice of the peace (JP). You will usually find a JP at a bank, post office or trade union office.

Please note that you will need to show each original document and a photocopy of it to the JP.

## Evidence of self-employment

Self employment on its own is not sufficient evidence to support an application for trade skills recognition. The VTT must be satisfied that you are adequately trained in the relevant trade vocation. If your application relies on a period of self employment to demonstrate you are adequately trained your application should also provide the following:

- an adequate explanation of how you developed your trade skills/knowledge
- evidence to demonstrate the scope of “hands on” trade work you have performed through self employment.

In addition evidence of self-employment can include the following:

- a statement from your accountant or solicitor certifying the name of your business, the type of business, its location, the exact dates when you were self-employed, and your role in the business
- a certificate of business registration covering the period of self-employment
- any trade license or registration you obtained while self-employed and evidence of the requirements you had to satisfy to obtain the license or registration
- statements from suppliers
- statements from clients detailing the trade you have performed and any on-going business relationship they have with you.
- a statutory declaration (affidavit or similar legal declaration), witnessed by a justice of the peace, in which you provide full details of:
  - how you developed your trade skills/knowledge
  - the period of self-employment
  - the occupation in which you were self-employed
  - the nature of the work you did
  - the tools, machines and equipment you used
  - the number of staff you employed and their occupations.

## Processing your application

When you submit an application to have your trade skills recognised, the VTT will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your application and check to see that you have:

- completed your application form correctly
- provided all relevant documents
- identified the trade vocation you are applying for.

The VTT will assess your application on the basis of the information you provide. This process involves comparing your training and work experience with the requirements for the equivalent trade in Australia.

The VTT will consider:

- the time you have worked in the trade
- the type of instruction and training you have received in the trade
- the duration of the training you have received
- relevant qualifications you have in the trade.

The VTT may check any of the information you provide to verify it is accurate and complete. Some or all of the information may therefore be made available to:

- your current or former employers
- any training organisations, colleges or institutions you have attended
- other State or Commonwealth departments or agencies.

When assessing your application the VTT may:

- contact you to get more information, and/or
- if you are working in a job relevant to the trade you have applied for, organise for a STS field officer to visit you at the work place to assess or validate or confirm the information you have provided, and/or
- request that you undertake a trade test which can be undertaken at a TAFE NSW college.

After paying the trade test fee a TAFE representative will contact you about the test, its time and location. Trade tests usually take between four and eight hours.

If you need an interpreter at the trade test, you should indicate this on your application form. In most cases, the TAFE college where you do your test will arrange an interpreter for you.

### **Schedule of fees**

Application for trade recognition	\$150.00
Trade test	\$275.00
Further trade test on appeal*	\$275.00
Work-based assessment	\$275.00
Replacement of trade certificate	\$30.00

Fees may be paid in person by EFTPOS, bank cheque or money order. If you are posting your application, you may only pay by bank cheque or money order (not cash). Bank cheques or money orders should be payable to the NSW Department of Education and Training.

## Timeframe to finalise your application

The time needed by the VTT to assess and determine the outcome of your application will depend on:

- the quality of the documents you provide
- whether the VTT wants you to provide more information
- whether a trade test or workplace assessment is needed.

Once the VTT has finished assessing your application, you will receive a letter advising you of its decision.

## Appeals

If the VTT rejects your application, you can appeal the decision to an independent appeals panel.

After the VTT has made its decision, you will be advised of your right of appeal and how to submit it.

## Trade certificates issued by the VTT

The VTT issues two types of trade certificates. These are the same as the certificates given to people who complete a trade apprenticeship in New South Wales.

A **certificate of proficiency** may be issued if:

- you have gained your trade skills through on-the-job experience – by being employed in the trade for four years or more or by completing an apprenticeship and
- you have completed an appropriate Australian qualification.

A **craft certificate** may be issued if:

- you have gained your trade skills through on-the-job experience by being employed in the trade for four years or more, but
- you have not completed an appropriate Australian qualification.

The craft certificate can also assist individuals to access pathways to national qualifications and licensing by:

- validating past trade experience
- validating that you are adequately trained to undertake trade work (subject to any additional requirements set out in licensing regulation).
- providing documentation to support an application for recognition of prior learning if enrolling in further study to gain a national trade qualification or licensing qualification.

## Licensed Trades

A number of trades in NSW require a license issued by a relevant licensing authority. **(The VTT does not issue licenses).**

To obtain a license in some trades you may have to complete a relevant national qualification or course of studies. The trade certificate issued to you by the VTT may help you to gain entry into the appropriate course of studies that may be required for licensing.

Trade or industry sectors requiring licensing include:

- aircraft trades
- building and construction trades
- refrigeration/air-conditioning trade
- electrical trades
- automotive trades
- plumbing trade.

You should contact the relevant licensing authority for further information regarding licensing matters.

## Licensing Authorities

### Aircraft Trades

Aircraft Maintenance Engineering Licensing Section  
Civil Aviation Safety Authority  
PO BOX 2005  
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601  
Phone: 13 17 57

<http://www.casa.gov.au/>

### Building and Construction Trades: Electrical, Plumbing, Refrigeration/Air-Conditioning

NSW Office of Fair Trading

Phone: 13 32 20 or visit:

[http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/About\\_us/Contact\\_us/Fair\\_Trading\\_Centres.html](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/About_us/Contact_us/Fair_Trading_Centres.html) for your nearest branch

### Automotive Trades

NSW Office of Fair Trading

Phone: 9619 8650 for automotive trades or visit:

[http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/About\\_us/Contact\\_us/Fair\\_Trading\\_Centres.html](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/About_us/Contact_us/Fair_Trading_Centres.html) for your nearest branch.

## Assistance for people from non English speaking countries

The following brochures contain a summary of trade recognition information. They are not a replacement for the detail which follows/ contained in the **Trade Skills Recognition in NSW** brochure.

Arabic	Bengali	Bosnian
Chinese (simplified)	Chinese (traditional)	Croatian
Filipino	Hindi	Korean
Serbian	Vietnamese	

### Translation services

If any document is not in English, you need to provide the VTT with a certified copy of the original and (attached to it) an English translation made by an official translating service. The translator must certify that the translation is complete and accurate.

In Australia, you can have your documents translated by:

#### Community Relations Commission

Level 8  
175 Castlereagh St  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Phone: 1300 651 500 or visit:

[http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/services/language\\_services](http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/services/language_services)

or

#### Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) National

To use an interpreter phone 131 450

[http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/help-with-english/learn-english/client/translation\\_help.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/help-with-english/learn-english/client/translation_help.htm)

The VTT may accept an official English translation from the country where you obtained your original documents.

## Contact details

### Vocational Training Tribunal

NSW Vocational Training Tribunal  
Level 12  
1 Oxford Street  
DARLINGHURST NSW 2010

Locked Bag 53  
DARLINGHURST NSW 1300

Phone: (02) 9266 8450 Fax: (02) 9266 8059

### State Training Services

State Training Services has nine regional centres at the following locations:

#### Hunter & Central Coast

Level 1 State Office Block  
117 Bull Street  
Newcastle West NSW 2302  
Ph: (02) 4974 8570 Fax: (02) 4925 2139  
[hunterstc@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:hunterstc@det.nsw.edu.au)

#### North Coast & Mid North Coast

Suite 3, Level 4  
29 Molesworth Street  
Lismore NSW 2480  
Ph: (02) 6627 8400 Fax: (02) 6621 9994  
[ncoaststc@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ncoaststc@det.nsw.edu.au)

#### Illawarra & South East NSW

Level 1, Block E State Office Block  
84 Crown Street  
Wollongong NSW 2500  
Ph: (02) 4224 9300 Fax: (02) 4224 9334  
[illawarrastc@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:illawarrastc@det.nsw.edu.au)

#### New England

Level 2 Noel Park House  
155-157 Marius Street  
Tamworth NSW 2340  
Ph: (02) 6755 5099 Fax: (02) 6766 4120  
[newenglandstc@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:newenglandstc@det.nsw.edu.au)

#### Riverina

87 Forsyth Street  
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650  
Ph: (02) 6937 7600 Fax: (02) 6921 0724  
[riverinastc@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:riverinastc@det.nsw.edu.au)

#### Western NSW

Level 1, State Office Block  
Cnr Kite & Anson Streets  
Orange NSW 2800  
Ph: (02) 6392 8500 Fax: (02) 6392 8539  
[westernnswstc@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:westernnswstc@det.nsw.edu.au)

#### Western Sydney & Blue Mountains

Ground Floor,  
16-18 Wentworth Street  
Parramatta NSW 2150  
Ph: (02) 9204 7400 Fax: (02) 9635 9775  
[wsydneystc@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:wsydneystc@det.nsw.edu.au)

#### Southern & South West Sydney

Level 2,  
41– 45 Rickard Road  
Bankstown NSW 2200  
Ph: (02) 8707 9600 Fax: (02) 9709 5356  
[swsydneystc@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:swsydneystc@det.nsw.edu.au)

#### Central & Northern Sydney

Level 13 12 Help Street  
Chatswood NSW 2067  
Ph: (02) 9242 1700 Fax: (02) 9415 3979  
[nsydneystc@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:nsydneystc@det.nsw.edu.au)



## Privacy notice

The information you provide in your application for trade skills recognition will be treated confidentially and will be used by the NSW Department of Education and Training and the Vocational Training Tribunal only for the purpose of assessing your application.

When dealing with your application, the VTT may validate the information you provide by contacting your current or former employers, any training organisations or colleges you have attended, and relevant State or Commonwealth departments or agencies.

The information you provide will be stored securely by DET, and you may correct any personal details at any time by contacting the VTT (phone 02 9266 8450).