

# Understanding the psychological contract in apprenticeships and traineeships to improve retention: support document

Erica Smith  
University of Ballarat

Arlene Walker  
Deakin University

Ros Brennan Kemmis  
Charles Sturt University

This document was produced by the author(s) based on their research for the report *Understanding the psychological contract in apprenticeships and traineeships to improve retention*, and is an added resource for further information. The report is available on NCVER's website: <<http://www.ncver.edu.au>>.

The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government, state and territory governments or NCVER. Any errors and omissions are the responsibility of the author(s).

© Commonwealth of Australia, 2011



With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the Department's logo, any material protected by a trade mark and where otherwise noted all material presented in this document is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia <<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au>> licence.

The details of the relevant licence conditions are available on the Creative Commons website (accessible using the links provided) as is the full legal code for the CC BY 3.0 AU licence <<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/legalcode>>.

The Creative Commons licence conditions do not apply to all logos, graphic design, artwork and photographs. Requests and enquiries concerning other reproduction and rights should be directed to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

This document should be attributed as Smith, E, Walker, A & Brennan Kemmis, R 2011, *Understanding the psychological contact in apprenticeships and traineeships to improve retention: support document*, NCVER.

This work has been produced by NCVER under the National Vocational Education and Training Research and Evaluation (NVETRE) Program, which is coordinated and managed by NCVER on behalf of the Australian Government and state and territory governments. Funding is provided through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

The NVETRE program is based upon priorities approved by ministers with responsibility for vocational education and training (VET). This research aims to improve policy and practice in the VET sector. For further information about the program go to the NCVER website <<http://www.ncver.edu.au>>. The author/project team was funded to undertake this research via a grant under the NVETRE program. These grants are awarded to organisations through a competitive process, in which NCVER does not participate.

The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author/project team and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government, state and territory governments or NCVER.

# Contents

Tables	4
Appendix 1a: Interview questions for expert stakeholders	8
Appendix 1b: Expert stakeholders positions and organisations	9
Appendix 1c: Expert stakeholder interviews - Summary of findings	10
Appendix 2a: Questionnaire for survey of apprentices and trainees	14
Appendix 2b: Questionnaire for survey of employers of apprentices and trainees	20
Appendix 2c: Questionnaire for survey of GTO-employed apprentices and trainees	28
Appendix 2d: Questionnaire for survey of GTOs-as-employers	38
Appendix 3: Additional findings from surveys	52
Appendix 4: Case study interview protocols	99
Appendix 5: Case study reports	104

# Tables

## Appendix 3

Table 1: Means and standard deviations examining differences between direct employed and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important employer obligations	53
Table 2: Means and standard deviations examining differences between direct employed and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important employee obligations	53
Table 3: Means and standard deviations examining differences between direct employed and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important training obligations	54
Table 4: Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important employer obligations	55
Table 5: Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important employee obligations	55
Table 6: Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important training obligations	56
Table 7: Means and standard deviations examining differences between direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important employer obligations	58
Table 8: Means and standard deviations examining differences between direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important employee obligations	58
Table 9: Means and standard deviations examining differences between direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important training obligations	59
Table 10: Means and standard deviations examining differences among GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important GTO and host employer obligations	61
Table 11: Means and standard deviations examining differences among GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important employee obligations to the GTO and Host employer	61
Table 12: Means, standard deviations and independent t-test statistic examining differences between direct employed and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding extent to which employer obligations were met	63

Table 13: Means, standard deviations and independent groups t-test statistics examining differences between direct employed and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding extent to which employee obligations were met	64
Table 14: Means, standard deviations and independent samples t-test statistics examining differences between direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding extent to which training obligations were met	65
Table 15: Means, standard deviations and independent groups t-test statistics examining differences between apprentices and trainees regarding extent to which employer obligations were met	66
Table 16: Means, standard deviations and independent groups t-test statistics examining differences between apprentices and trainees regarding extent employee obligations were met	68
Table 17: Means, standard deviations and independent groups t-test statistics examining differences between apprentices and trainees regarding extent training obligations were met	70
Table 18: Means, standard deviations and independent samples t-test statistics examining differences between direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding extent to which employer obligations were met	73
Table 19: Means, standard deviations and independent samples t-test statistics examining differences between direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding extent to which employee obligations were met	74
Table 20: Means, standard deviations and independent samples t-test statistics examining differences between direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding extent to which training obligations were met	75
Table 21: Means, standard deviations and repeated measures t-test statistic examining differences between extent GTO and host employer obligations have been met	76
Table 22: Means, standard deviations and repeated measures t-test statistics examining differences between extent employee obligations to GTO and host employer have been met	77
Table 23. Means and independent samples t-test statistics examining differences between employers and employees regarding mean importance and met ratings	78
Table 24: Means and independent t-test statistic examining differences between employers and employees regarding importance of employer obligations	80

Table 25: Means and independent t-test statistic examining differences between employers and employees regarding importance of employee obligations	81
Table 26: Means and independent t-test statistic examining differences between employers and employees regarding importance of training obligations	82
Table 27: Means and independent t-test statistic examining differences between employers and employees regarding extent to which employer obligations were met	84
Table 28: Means and independent t-test statistic examining differences between employers and employees regarding extent to which employee obligations were met	85
Table 29: Means and independent t-test statistic examining differences between employers and employees regarding extent to which training obligations were met	86
Table 30: Means, standard deviations and independent samples t-test statistics examining differences between employers and employees regarding mean importance and met ratings	86
Table 31. Does being employed by a GTO provide a different experience from being directly employed by a company?	88
Table 32. Who has the major responsibility for the commitments and obligations that you feel are due to the apprentice/trainee?	88
Table 33. Means and repeated measures t-test statistics examining differences between GTO employers mean ratings of GTO related and host employer related obligations	89
Table 34. Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices who did or did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding importance of employer obligations.	89
Table 35. Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices who did or did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding importance of employee obligations.	90
Table 36. Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices who did or did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding importance of training obligations.	90
Table 37. Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices who did or did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding extent to which employer obligations have been met.	91
Table 38. Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices who did or did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding extent to which employee obligations have been met.	91

Table 39. Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices who did or did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding extent to which training obligations have been met.	92
Table 40. Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices who did or did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding mean importance and met ratings.	92
Table 41: Means, standard deviations and independent groups t-tests examining differences between direct and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding literacy and numeracy expectations and perceived actual difficulty	96
Table 42: Means, standard deviations and independent groups t-tests examining differences between direct and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding expectations and perceived difficulty of literacy and numeracy	97

## Appendix 5

Table 1: Interviews: ElectroGTO	105
Table 2 Interviews: RestaurantCo	114
Table 3 Interviews: RegionalGTO	122
Table 4 Interviews: BuildingCo	129
Table 5 Interviews: PowerCo	137
Table 6 Interviews: Electrical RailCo	143
Table 7 Interviews: RetailCo	150
Table 8 Interviews: ManufacturingCo	156
Table 9 Cadetship program at Hospitality and GamingCo	162
Table 11 Interviews: Hospital and gaming company	162

# Appendix 1a: Interview questions for expert stakeholders

- 1 What is your organisation's role in relation to apprenticeships and traineeships?
- 2 What previous experiences have you yourself had in this area?
- 3 What does each party expect of the other in relation to:
  - a) Apprenticeships?
  - b) Traineeships?

(Are there any differences from run-of-the-mill employees?)

- 4 What are the discrepancies that might exist between the two parties:
  - a) Apprenticeships?
  - b) Traineeships?

(Are there any differences from run-of-the-mill employees?)

- 5 What might explain these discrepancies?
- 6 What happens if expectations of either party are not met in:
  - a) Apprenticeships?
  - b) Traineeships?
- 7 Is there anything in particular that should be included in the survey of apprentices/trainees and of employers concerning expectations of the two parties?
- 8 Any suggestions for case study companies (and contact names)?
- 9 Are you interested in being on the project's reference group (max. three teleconferences and reading draft reports)?



# Appendix 1b: Expert stakeholders positions and organisations

## Expert group interviewee names and details

	Organisation	Contact(s)
<b>Peak bodies</b>	National Association of Australian apprenticeship Centres (NAAAC)	Executive Officer & President
	Australian Council of Trade Unions	Industrial Officer
	Australian Industry Group	Associate Director, Education and Training
	Group Training Australia	CEO / National Project Manager
<b>Government departments</b>	Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development	Apprenticeship administration manager
	Skills Queensland	Director of Industry Development, DETA Qld
	Department of Education and Employment Relations	Director Programs Support, Australian Apprenticeships Branch & Manager of Skills Branch, Vic State office
<b>Organisations dealing with apprenticeships / traineeships</b>	Public RTO	Apprenticeship Field Officer, Victorian TAFE Institute
	Private RTO	Manager, community RTO
	Australian Apprenticeship Centres	Operations Manager for state-based service

# Appendix 1c: Expert stakeholder interviews - Summary of findings

## Features of the psychological contract as described by high-level stakeholders

Primary responsibility	Views about expectations and promises	Views about possible discrepancies between the parties to the psychological contract
Apprenticeship Centres: Peak body representative- 2 interviewees	<p>Held by Managers/Employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Sometimes unrealistic</li> <li>✧ Often dependent on the size of the organisation</li> <li>✧ Compliance is sometimes a hindrance and gets in the way</li> <li>✧ Employers take on apprentices for reasons of social contribution</li> <li>✧ Trainees can be taken on for the wrong reasons</li> </ul> <p>Held by Apprentices/Trainees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Not always well informed about the trades</li> <li>✧ Not always committed</li> <li>✧ Trainees do not necessarily expect a career path</li> </ul>	<p>Discrepant views about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ What the training involves</li> <li>✧ Lack of recognition of on the job training versus off the job training</li> <li>✧ A lack of understanding on the part of apprentices/trainees about the nature of work</li> <li>✧ The social and cultural circumstances that surround the lives of apprentices/trainees.</li> <li>✧ Management of the apprentices/trainees</li> </ul>
Australian Apprenticeship Centre: Operations Manager	<p>Held by Managers/Employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Commonsense and courtesy</li> <li>✧ Apprentices/trainees will attend to their work as do other employees</li> <li>✧ Apprentices will be retained</li> <li>✧ Trainees are far less likely to progress in terms of a career</li> </ul> <p>Held by Apprentices/Trainees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Commonsense and courtesy</li> <li>✧ Expect to be treated as all other employees</li> <li>✧ A clear set of parameters around the work demands</li> <li>✧ Consistency</li> <li>✧ Routine</li> </ul>	<p>Discrepant views about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Attitudes to work</li> <li>✧ Communication</li> <li>✧ The need to provide support in the workplace with particular reference to work instructions and expectations of prior knowledge</li> <li>✧ Lifestyle and age related activities</li> <li>✧ Pay rates</li> <li>✧ Off the job training particularly in rural and remote areas</li> <li>✧ The way training should be delivered.</li> <li>✧ The nature of the trade and its particular exigencies</li> </ul>
GTO Peak body- 2 interviewees	<p>Held by Managers/Employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Fulfil certain obligations such as reliability, punctuality and honesty</li> </ul> <p>Held by Apprentices/Trainees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ High quality training and learning</li> <li>✧ Learning and earning</li> <li>✧ Treated fairly and honestly</li> <li>✧ Differ according to the industry area and according to traineeship or apprenticeship. Screened selection in highly technical areas implies different and higher expectations</li> </ul>	<p>Discrepant views about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ A sense of vocation</li> <li>✧ The Training Contract and its power and influence</li> <li>✧ The nature of the work</li> <li>✧ Off the job training</li> <li>✧ Information and communication</li> <li>✧ Organisational arrangements for training</li> </ul>
State Government Training Authority	<p>Held by Managers/Employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Reliable employee</li> <li>✧ A productive employee</li> </ul> <p>Held by Apprentices/Trainees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Some apprentices expect very high levels of skill development</li> </ul>	<p>Discrepant views about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ The amount and type of information that apprentices and trainees need.</li> <li>✧ Loyalty and remaining committed</li> <li>✧ Skill acquisition and the extent to which the organisation can provide this</li> <li>✧ Organisational needs</li> </ul>

<b>Primary responsibility</b>	<b>Views about expectations and promises</b>	<b>Views about possible discrepancies between the parties to the psychological contract</b>
State Industry Development Department	<p>Held by Managers/Employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Having a qualified person to supervise apprentices and trainees</li> </ul> <p>Held by Apprentices/Trainees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Stronger bonded employment relationship for apprentices than for trainees.</li> <li>✧ Sometimes naïve</li> <li>✧ Need to please the employer</li> </ul>	<p>Discrepant views about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Lack of information on the part of employers about their obligations and responsibilities</li> <li>✧ Newer organizations may be naïve about expectations and responsibilities</li> <li>✧ The nature of contracts and their binding provisions</li> <li>✧ Power relationships</li> <li>✧ Generational characteristics</li> </ul>
Federal Government employees- 2 interviewees	<p>Held by Managers/Employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ A willingness to learn</li> <li>✧ A certain amount of initiative that increases as the time employed increases</li> <li>✧ Good work ethic</li> <li>✧ Work output and increasing productivity</li> </ul> <p>Held by Apprentices/Trainees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ To be told what to do</li> <li>✧ Provided with feedback</li> <li>✧ Positive encouragement</li> <li>✧ Development of greater work competence, capacity and scope</li> </ul>	<p>Discrepant views about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Development of independent skills</li> <li>✧ Conceptions of the 'big picture' related to the job such as the full scope of work</li> <li>✧ The amount and kind of work directions provided</li> <li>✧ The type and amount of induction</li> <li>✧ The communication of expectations</li> <li>✧ The amount and type of feedback provided</li> <li>✧ Working conditions and issues such as pay, compliance and hours of work</li> <li>✧ The rate at which competence is acquired</li> </ul>
Private RTO	<p>Held by Managers/Employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Adding value to the business</li> </ul> <p>Held by Apprentices/Trainees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Clear training outcomes</li> <li>✧ To complete the apprenticeship or traineeship</li> </ul>	<p>Discrepant views about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ The role of the trainer</li> <li>✧ RTO support systems</li> <li>✧ Issues related to off the job training such as time demands and quality</li> <li>✧ Recognition of prior learning and experience</li> </ul>
Employee Peak Organisation	<p>Held by Managers/Employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ The acquisition of knowledge and skilled output is higher than for normal employees Unrealistically high expectations about employability skills</li> </ul> <p>Held by Apprentices/Trainees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Dependent on how they entered the apprenticeship or traineeship. A pre apprenticeship means that expectations are more realistic. The expectation of a relationship with a skilled tradesperson</li> <li>✧ The learning processes and outputs will be of a high quality</li> <li>✧ The learning processes and outputs will be of a high quality</li> </ul>	<p>Discrepant views about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ The role of the apprentice/trainee as a learner</li> <li>✧ The speed at which the learning takes place</li> <li>✧ Levels of performance in the workplace</li> <li>✧ Assessing levels of achievement: competency based or time based</li> </ul>
Employer Peak Body	<p>Held by Managers/Employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ To impart skills</li> <li>✧ To sometimes have a paternal relationship</li> <li>✧ To give back to industry</li> <li>✧ Apprentices/trainees may be less autonomous</li> </ul> <p>Held by Apprentices/Trainees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ To gain a qualification</li> <li>✧ To gain skills through work</li> <li>✧ Both sides expect "learning through application"</li> </ul>	<p>Discrepant views about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ The conditions of training</li> <li>✧ The significance of the training contract</li> <li>✧ Attitudes to pay rates</li> <li>✧ Levels of work monitoring</li> <li>✧ Performance at work</li> </ul>

Primary responsibility	Views about expectations and promises	Views about possible discrepancies between the parties to the psychological contract
Federal Government Representative – 2 interviewees	<p>Held by Managers/Employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ “ a good fit”</li> <li>✧ Punctuality</li> <li>✧ Good return on investment</li> <li>✧ Interest in the work</li> <li>✧ Enthusiasm</li> <li>✧ Loyalty</li> <li>✧ Honesty</li> <li>✧ The acquisition of skills</li> <li>✧ Productivity</li> <li>✧ Performance in the workplace</li> </ul> <p>Held by Apprentices/Trainees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Meaningful work</li> <li>✧ RTO as the intermediary</li> <li>✧ Wage fairness</li> <li>✧ Quality training</li> <li>✧ Appropriate time for training</li> <li>✧ Employment</li> <li>✧ Good work culture</li> <li>✧ Progress through qualification</li> <li>✧ Access to an RTO</li> <li>✧ Confidence in the employer</li> </ul>	<p>Discrepant views about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Personalities</li> <li>✧ Nature of the work</li> <li>✧ Understandings of the work and the workplace</li> <li>✧ Understandings of the responsibilities of the traineeship or apprenticeship</li> <li>✧ Communication styles</li> <li>✧ Nature and type of induction</li> <li>✧ Cultural differences</li> <li>✧ Age differences</li> </ul>
Public RTO / TAFE	<p>Held by Managers/Employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ The acquisition of knowledge and skilled output is higher than for normal employees Unrealistically high expectations about employability skills</li> </ul> <p>Held by Apprentices/Trainees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Dependent on how they entered the apprenticeship or traineeship. A pre apprenticeship means that expectations are more realistic. The expectation of a relationship with a skilled tradesperson</li> <li>✧ The learning processes and outputs will be of a high quality</li> </ul> <p>Held by Managers/Employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ To impart skills</li> <li>✧ To sometimes have a paternal relationship</li> <li>✧ To give back to industry</li> <li>✧ Apprentices/trainees may be less autonomous</li> </ul> <p>Held by Apprentices/Trainees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ To gain a qualification</li> <li>✧ To gain skills through work</li> <li>✧ Both sides expect “learning through application”</li> </ul>	<p>Discrepant views about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ The role of the apprentice/trainee as a learner</li> <li>✧ The speed at which the learning takes place</li> <li>✧ Levels of performance in the workplace</li> <li>✧ Assessing levels of achievement: competency based or time based</li> </ul> <p>Discrepant views about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ The conditions of training</li> <li>✧ The significance of the training contract</li> <li>✧ Attitudes to pay rates</li> <li>✧ Levels of work monitoring</li> <li>✧ Performance at work</li> </ul>

Primary responsibility	Views about expectations and promises	Views about possible discrepancies between the parties to the psychological contract
	Held by Managers/Employers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Punctuality</li> <li>✧ Interest in the work</li> <li>✧ Enthusiasm</li> <li>✧ Loyalty</li> <li>✧ Honesty</li> <li>✧ The acquisition of skills</li> <li>✧ Productivity</li> <li>✧ Performance in the workplace</li> </ul>	Discrepant views about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Personalities</li> <li>✧ Nature of the work</li> <li>✧ Understandings of the work and the workplace</li> <li>✧ Communication styles</li> <li>✧ Nature and type of induction</li> <li>✧ Cultural differences</li> <li>✧ Age differences</li> </ul>
	Held by Apprentices/Trainees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Meaningful work</li> <li>✧ Wage fairness</li> <li>✧ Quality training</li> <li>✧ Employment</li> <li>✧ Good work culture</li> <li>✧ Progress through qualification</li> <li>✧ Access to an RTO</li> <li>✧ Confidence in the employer</li> </ul>	

Notes: RTO = registered training organisation

# Appendix 2a: Questionnaire for survey of apprentices and trainees



# A University of Ballarat research study

Funded by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research

## Your apprenticeship/traineeship: What are the mutual commitments?

Please answer this survey for the apprenticeship/traineeship in which you are currently enrolled. If you are doing more than one apprenticeship or traineeship, please answer for the one you started first. If you prefer not to answer any questions, simply leave them out.

### Section 1: About you, your apprenticeship/traineeship and your company

- What is your age?** .....
- Are you (tick one)?**  
 Male  Female
- Do any of the following apply to you? (tick as many as are relevant)**  
 You are Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander  
 English is not the main language spoken in your home  
 English is the main language spoken at home but at least one of your parents was born in a non-English speaking country
- Do you work in a: (tick one only)**  
 Capital city (i.e. Melbourne or Brisbane)  Regional city (more than 10,000 population)  
 Small town (500 -10,000 population)  Remote area (in town less than 500 or outside town)
- Is your contract of training an apprenticeship or a traineeship? (tick one)**  
 An apprenticeship  A traineeship  
 Not sure which
- What qualification will you have as a result of finishing the apprenticeship/traineeship? (tick one)**  
 Certificate II  Certificate III  
 Certificate IV  Other  
 Don't know .....
- How long have you been working as an apprentice or trainee in this qualification? (tick one)**  
 Less than 3 months  3 to less than 6 months  
 7 to less than 12 months  12 months to less than 2 years  
 2 years to less than 3 years  3 years plus

8. **Had you been working for this employer before starting the apprenticeship/traineeship?**

- Yes  No

**If yes, for how long? (tick one)**

- Less than 6 months  6 months to less than 1 year  
 1 year to less than 2 years  2 years plus

9. **How long did you expect the apprenticeship/traineeship to last altogether (from when you started it)? (tick one)**

- Less than 12 months  12 months to less than 2 years  
 2 years to less than 3 years  3 years plus

10. **Are you employed: (tick one)**

- Full time permanent?  Part time permanent?  
 Casual?

**If part-time or casual, are you still at secondary school?**

- Yes  No

**If yes, is your apprenticeship/traineeship linked to your secondary school study?**

- Yes  No

11. **Is your apprenticeship or traineeship your main activity? (for example you may also be studying at university, or have another job) (tick one)**

- Yes  No

12. **Is the formal training provided by the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) (including TAFE) (tick one):**

**Note:** This question does not apply to training provided by your employer. It applies to what the RTO and its staff does.

- Off-the-job day release at the RTO?  On-the-job with some formal training sessions in a training room  
 Off-the-job block release (e.g. 1 week every two months) at the RTO, that you can travel to daily?  On-the-job with no formal training sessions in a training room  
 Off-the-job block release (e.g. 1 week every two months) at the RTO, that you have to stay away from home to attend?  Other (please give details).....  
.....

13. **When you started your apprenticeship/traineeship, how committed were you to a long-term career in this occupation or industry? (tick one)**

- Extremely committed  Somewhat committed  
 Neither committed nor uncommitted  I did not want a long-term career in this industry area



14. **What is the nature of your employment as an apprentice or trainee? (tick one only):**

**Note:** A Group Training Organisation is a company which acts as your legal employer and pays you, but places you with a 'host employer' to do your work)

- I am employed directly by a company and have only worked for one company as an apprentice or trainee
- I am employed directly by a company and have worked for two or more companies as an apprentice or trainee
- I am employed by a Group Training Organisation and have only worked for one host employer as an apprentice or trainee
- I am employed by a Group Training Organisation and have worked for two or more host employers
- Unsure
- Other. Please give details.....

15. **In what sort of industry is the apprenticeship or traineeship? (tick one)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farming, forestry, fishing                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing and engineering (in a factory or similar)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Building including electrical and plumbing   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transport   | <input type="checkbox"/> Retailing (shop work)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hairdressing and beauty                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Food processing  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fast food, cafes, restaurants & accommodation             | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural, recreational or sporting   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Banking / real estate / insurance                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Clerical / administration  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government administration including education and defence | <input type="checkbox"/> Health, personal and community services (including aged care and child care centres) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications / media / computing                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Automotive (e.g. mechanic / panel beater)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details)<br>.....                      |   |

16. **Have you previously undertaken a pre-apprenticeship in the same industry area?**

**Note:** These are available only in certain trade areas. (tick one)

- Yes  No

17. **How big is the company or organisation for which you work?**

**Note:** If you are employed by a Group Training Organisation, please answer for the host employer, i.e. the company in which you are currently placed. (tick one)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A small single site, with fewer than 20 employees | <input type="checkbox"/> A medium single site, with between 21 and 100 employees    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A large single site, with 101 or more employees   | <input type="checkbox"/> A multi-site company (a company with more than one branch) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know  |   |

18. **Is there an active trade union at your workplace that represents people doing the type of work that you do?**

**Note:** If the trade union is active, you may see notices about union meetings, or there may be a trade union representative that talks to staff one to one. (tick one)

- Yes  No  Don't know

## Section 2: Job obligations, commitments and expectations

**This section asks you about your expectations of the obligations and commitments that might apply during the course of an apprenticeship/traineeship. It relates both to what you expect from your employer and to what you feel you are expected to contribute.**

**Notes:** In this section, (i) The word 'company' is taken to apply to other organisations as well, eg if you work for a government department. (ii) If you are employed by a Group Training Organisation, please answer for the host employer, i.e. the company in which you are currently placed) (iii) Please use the n/a (not applicable column) for anything you feel is irrelevant to you and your apprenticeship/traineeship.

19. ***The obligations and commitments of your employer (i.e. the company that you work for) to you: How important are they?***

**During my apprenticeship/traineeship I believe it is important for my employing company to:**

Please circle one number on the scale on each line

		Obligation is not at all important ←—————→ Obligation is extremely important										
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Talk with me about matters which affect me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Help me develop my career	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	Be particularly considerate of long-serving employees	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Provide me with support regarding personal problems	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Provide the resources required to do my work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Make sure I am given a job that I like	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Make sure my performance appraisal is fair	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	Treat me the same as everyone with respect to rules and discipline	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	Help me gain promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Give me adequate training for the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Allow me time off to meet personal or family needs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	Act in a supportive way towards me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

20. ***Please note any other obligations or commitments that you believe your employing company has towards you during the apprenticeship/traineeship.***

.....  
 .....

21. ***Have your expectations of your employer's obligations or commitments changed since starting your apprenticeship/traineeship? (tick one)***

Yes  No

***If yes, please explain, if you wish, how your expectations have changed***

.....  
 .....

## Section 2: Job obligations, commitments and expectations

This section asks you about your expectations of the obligations and commitments that might apply during the course of an apprenticeship/traineeship. It relates both to what you expect from your employer and to what you feel you are expected to contribute.

**Notes:** In this section, (i) The word 'company' is taken to apply to other organisations as well, eg if you work for a government department. (ii) If you are employed by a Group Training Organisation, please answer for the host employer, i.e. the company in which you are currently placed) (iii) Please use the n/a (not applicable column) for anything you feel is irrelevant to you and your apprenticeship/traineeship.

22. **The obligations and commitments of your employer (i.e. the company that you work for) to you: How important are they?**

During my apprenticeship/traineeship I believe it is important for my employing company to:

Please circle one number on the scale on each line

		Obligation is not at all important	←—————→										Obligation is extremely important
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1	Talk with me about matters which affect me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2	Help me develop my career	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
3	Be particularly considerate of long-serving employees	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
4	Provide me with support regarding personal problems	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
5	Provide the resources required to do my work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6	Make sure I am given a job that I like	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
7	Make sure my performance appraisal is fair	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
8	Treat me the same as everyone with respect to rules and discipline	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
9	Help me gain promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
10	Give me adequate training for the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	Allow me time off to meet personal or family needs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
12	Act in a supportive way towards me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

23. **Please note any other obligations or commitments that you believe your employing company has towards you during the apprenticeship/traineeship.**

.....

.....

24. **Have your expectations of your employer's obligations or commitments changed since starting your apprenticeship/traineeship? (tick one)**

Yes  No

**If yes, please explain, if you wish, how your expectations have changed**

.....

.....

25. **Employer obligations and commitments to you: How well have they been met? Note: Naturally,** these answers may be affected by the length of time you have been employed in that job

**During my apprenticeship/traineeship, my employing company has, so far, met their obligation to:**

Please circle one number on the scale on each line

		Obligation is not at all met	←————→										Obligation is completely met
1	Talk with me about matters which affect me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
2	Help me develop my career	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
3	Be particularly considerate of long-serving employees	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
4	Provide me with support regarding personal problems	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
5	Provide the resources required to do my work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
6	Make sure I am given a job that I like	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
7	Make sure my performance appraisal is fair	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
8	Treat me the same as everyone with respect to rules and discipline	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
9	Help me gain promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
10	Give me adequate training for the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
11	Allow me time off to meet personal or family needs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
12	Act in a supportive way towards me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

26. **Your obligations and commitments to your employer: How important are they? During my apprenticeship / traineeship, I believe it is important that I:**

Please circle one number on the scale on each line

		Obligation is not at all important	←————→										Obligation is extremely important
1	Stay with my present employer until the end of my apprenticeship/traineeship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2	Protect the reputation of my employing company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
3	Put the interests of my employer first at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
4	Be open with my supervisor / employer about things affecting work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
5	Always be loyal to my employing company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6	Do non-required tasks which make the place run more smoothly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
7	Refuse to support my employers' competitors	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
8	Spend a minimum of two years with my present employer after completion of my apprenticeship/ traineeship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
9	Work more hours than I am contracted to work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
10	Be willing to accept a transfer	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	Refuse to give outsiders any company information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
12	Become more skilled at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
13	Work well with others	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
14	Put in a full day's work for a full day's pay	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
15	Attend work every day when scheduled	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
16	Always be punctual for work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

27. **Please note any other obligations or commitments that you believe you have to your employing company during the apprenticeship/traineeship.**

.....  
 .....

28. ***Your obligations and commitments to your employer: How well have you met them?***

**Note:** Naturally, these answers may be affected by the length of time you have been employed in that job.

**During my apprenticeship/traineeship, I have, so far, met my obligation to:**

Please circle one number on the scale on each line

		Obligation is not at all met	←————→										Obligation is completely met
1	Stay with my present employer until the end of my apprenticeship/traineeship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
2	Protect the reputation of my employing company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
3	Put the interests of my employer first at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
4	Be open with my supervisor / employer about things affecting work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
5	Always be loyal to my employing company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
6	Do non-required tasks which make the place run more smoothly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
7	Refuse to support my employers competitors	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
8	<b>This question has been omitted as it is not relevant at this stage in your job</b>												n/a
9	Work more hours than I am contracted to work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
10	Be willing to accept a transfer	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
11	Refuse to give outsiders any company information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
12	Become more skilled at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
13	Work well with others	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
14	Put in a full day's work for a full day's pay	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
15	Attend work every day when scheduled	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
16	Always be punctual for work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

29. ***If you answered in Question 14 that you are employed by a Group Training Organisation, please answer the following two questions. Otherwise go to Question 27.***

**Who has the major responsibility for the commitments and obligations that you feel are due to you? (tick one)**

- Your Group Training Organisation
  Your host employer  
 Both equally

**Does being employed by a Group Training Organisation provide a different experience from being directly employed by a company? (tick one)**

- Yes
  No  
 Makes no difference
  Don't know

Please add any comments if you wish .....

.....

### Section 3: Training obligations, commitments and expectations

This section asks you about your expectations of the training that applies during the course of an apprenticeship/traineeship. It relates both to what is provided by your Registered Training Organisation and what is provided by your employer.

**Notes:** In this section, (i) The word 'company' is taken to apply to other organisations as well, eg if you work for a government department. (ii) If you are employed by a Group Training Organisation, please answer for the host employer, i.e. the company in which you are currently placed (iii) Please use the n/a (not applicable column) for anything you feel is irrelevant to you and your apprenticeship/traineeship.

30. **Training obligations and commitments: How important are they?**

**During my apprenticeship/traineeship, I believe that it is important that I receive training that involves:**

Please circle one number on the scale on each line

		This element is not at all important	←————→										This element is extremely important
1	An identified person as my apprenticeship/traineeship contact in both the RTO and the company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2	Exposure to different processes / experiences in my job (not just repetitive or low-level work)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
3	A range of methods of training, both on and off the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
4	Assessment that is not too easy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
5	Assessment that is not too hard	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6	Assessment that is regular	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
7	Assessment that involves written and/or verbal feedback	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
8	The opportunity to keep learning new things	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
9	Specific time set aside for training, not just working	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
10	Opportunities to apply what I have learned	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	Opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

31. **Please note any other training-related obligations or commitments that you believe your employing company and RTO have towards you during the apprenticeship/traineeship:**

.....  
 .....

32. **Training obligations and commitments: How well have they been met?**

**Note:** Naturally, these answers may be affected by the length of time you have been employed in that job.  
**During my apprenticeship/traineeship, my RTO and my employing company have, so far, met their obligation to provide me with training that involves:**

Please circle one number on the scale on each line

		Expectations are not at all met	←————→										Expectations are completely met
1	An identified person as my apprenticeship/traineeship contact in both the RTO and the company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
2	Exposure to different processes / experiences in my job (not just repetitive or low-level work)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
3	A range of methods of training, both on and off the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
4	Assessment that is not too easy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
5	Assessment that is not too hard	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
6	Assessment that is regular	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
7	Assessment that involves written and/or verbal feedback	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
8	The opportunity to keep learning new things	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
9	Specific time set aside for training, not just working	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
10	Opportunities to apply what I have learned	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
11	Opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

## Section 4: Reading, writing and maths expectations

This section asks you about your expectations of the literacy and numeracy (reading, writing and maths) involved with your apprenticeship/traineeship.

33. **Did you read your apprenticeship/traineeship contract when you started your apprenticeship/traineeship?**

- Yes  
 No

**If yes, how difficult was it to read and understand your apprenticeship/traineeship contract when you started your apprenticeship / traineeship?**

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←————→			Extremely difficult
1	Difficulty reading my contract	1	2	3	4	5
2	Difficulty understanding my contract	1	2	3	4	5

Please add any comments if you wish .....

34. **How difficult did you expect your training to be in terms of:**

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←————→			Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5

35. **How difficult have you found your training to be in terms of:**

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←————→			Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5

Please add any comments if you wish .....

36. **How difficult did you expect your daily work to be in terms of:**

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←————→			Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5

37. **How difficult have you found your daily work to be in terms of:**

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←————→			Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5

Please add any comments if you wish .....

**Thank you for completing this survey!**

**Don't forget to fill in the small yellow form if you would like to be in the prize draw. Please return your survey by December 22nd 2009 to be eligible for the draw.**

**If you have mislaid the reply paid envelope, the return address is "NCVER Apprentice Project, Reply Paid 169, Fairfield, Vic 3078." No stamp required.**

# Appendix 2b: Questionnaire for survey of employers of apprentices and trainees





**A University of Ballarat research study**  
Funded by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research

**Apprenticeships: What are the mutual commitments?**

This survey should be answered by a person who is able to speak about apprenticeships and traineeships in your company/organisation (*from now on we use the word 'company' only*). As far as possible this person should be senior enough to give a response that is felt to be typical of the intent of the company. The survey is confidential. If you would prefer not to answer any question, please just leave it out. The survey has Australian Government Statistical Clearing House Approval - Number 02086 – 01.

By **apprenticeship**, we refer to traditional trades, generally three or four years in duration; by **traineeship** we refer to the newer (post-1987) contracts of training, generally 12 months to 2 years in duration and often in newer industries or non-trade occupations.

**Preliminary questions**

**Which type(s) of workers in contracted training do you employ?**

- Apprentices only       Trainees only       Both

**If both, which predominates?**

- More apprentices       More trainees       About the same number of each

**If you employ both, we'd appreciate it if you can complete both surveys. If you don't have time, please complete the survey for the group that has the biggest numbers in your company.**

Please complete this blue form with relation to the **apprentices** in your company. We recognise that sometimes it is difficult to answer in a general sense, but ask you to do this as far as is possible. Do not answer the survey if you do not employ apprentices. Your company name was given by your State Training Authority, and it is possible that errors may be made.

*Please note: If you are a Group Training Organisation (GTO), please do not complete this survey. We are surveying GTOs separately. If you are keen to be included in the sample, please email Erica Smith on e.smith@ballarat.edu.au to let her know.*

**Section 1: About you, your company and the apprentices in the company**

**1. In which State are you located?**

- Queensland       Victoria

**2. What is your role in the company?** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. How long have you been working in this company?**

- Up to two years       Two years or more      \_\_\_\_\_ (state no.)

**4. Have you yourself ever undertaken an apprenticeship or traineeship? (tick any that apply)**

- Apprenticeship       Traineeship

**5. Is the company site at which you work in a: (tick one only)**

- Capital city (i.e. Melbourne or Brisbane)       Small town (500 – 10,000 population)  
 Regional city (more than 10,000 population)       Remote area (town less than 500 or outside town)

**6. How big is your company?**

- A single site, with fewer than 20 employees       A single site, with between 21 and 100 employees  
 A single site with 101 or more employees       A multi-site company (a company with more than one branch)  
 Other

**7. Is there a trade union(s) active within your company that represents the major jobs that your apprentices do?**

Yes – active

Yes – not very active

No

Don't know

8. **Please indicate whether you normally pay apprentices the relevant award rate of pay (which is a discounted rate applicable to those in apprenticeships and traineeships), or above that rate.**

- The award rate                       Above the award rate  
 Don't know                       Prefer not to say

9. **How many apprentices on average does your company recruit in a normal year? (tick one)**

- Fewer than five                       5 – 19  
 Between 20 and 99                       100 plus

10. **How often on average does your company recruit apprentices? (tick one)**

- Continuously (more often than once a month)  
 Occasionally (less than once a month but more than once a year)  
 Once a year  
 Less often than once a year

11. **What qualification levels are your company's apprentices offered? (tick all that apply)**

- Certificate III                       Certificate IV  
 Diploma                       Other (please specify)

12. **In general, how long do the apprenticeships last for? (tick one)**

- 12 months to less than 2 years                       2 years to less than 3 years  
 3 years plus                       Other

Please give further details if you like

13. **Are the apprentices employed: (tick all that apply)**

- Full-time permanently?                       Part-time permanently?                       Casually?

**13 (a) In general, what proportion of apprentices are still at secondary school?**

- All                       Between half and all  
 One or more, but fewer than half                       None

**13 (b) For apprentices that are still at secondary school, what proportion (approximately) are formally School-Based (ie their apprenticeship is linked to their school studies)?**

- All                       Between half and all  
 One or more, but fewer than half                       None

14. **In general, what proportion of apprentices are recruited from the existing workforce within your company? (This question excludes the practice of taking on 'outside' people for a short trial before placing on apprenticeships)**

- All                       Between half and all  
 Fewer than half but at least a few                       None

15. **Do you employ any apprentices through a Group Training Organisation? (tick one only)**

- Yes, all apprentices                       Yes, some apprentices  
 No, all apprentices are employed directly by the company                       Unsure

Please give further details if you like

---

16. **In what sort of industry is the major activity of your company? (tick one)**

- Farming, forestry, fishing                       Mining  
 Manufacturing and engineering                       Building including electrical and plumbing  
 Transport                       Retailing (shop work)  
 Hairdressing and beauty                       Food processing  
 Fast food, cafes, restaurants & accommodation                       Cultural, recreational or sporting  
 Banking / real estate / insurance                       Clerical / administration  
 Government Administration including education and defence                       Health, personal and community services (including aged care and child care services)  
 Communications / media / computing                       Automotive (e.g. mechanic / panel beater)  
 Other (please give details) \_\_\_\_\_
-

**17. In general, how choosy (selective) would you say you are in selecting apprentices? (tick one) (Please note we understand that labour market conditions may affect your 'choosiness'; we ask you to answer for how choosy you ARE, rather than how choosy you would LIKE to be)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very choosy     | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat choosy   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not very choosy | <input type="checkbox"/> Not choosy at all |

Please comment on your answer if you wish

**18. In general, what recruitment and selection techniques do you use when selecting apprentices from outside the company? (tick as many as apply)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application form              | <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation from existing employees                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interview                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Selection or 'assessment' centre with a range of methods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paid trial as ordinary worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Unpaid trial   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Probation period              | <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-apprenticeship courses                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aptitude test                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy and/or numeracy test                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-employment medical tests  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other  |

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**19. In general, when they start their apprenticeships, how committed do you think the apprentices you recruit from 'outside' the company are to a long-term career in this occupation or industry? (tick one)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely committed               | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat committed                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither committed nor uncommitted | <input type="checkbox"/> Not very committed                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not committed at all              | <input type="checkbox"/> We don't recruit from outside the company |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know                        |  |

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**20. In general, when they start their apprenticeships, how committed do you think the apprentices you recruit from 'inside' the company are to a long-term career in this occupation or industry? (tick one)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely committed               | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat committed                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither committed nor uncommitted | <input type="checkbox"/> Not very committed                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not committed at all              | <input type="checkbox"/> We don't recruit from inside the company |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know                        |   |

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**21. In general, how committed is your company to the recruitment and training of apprentices? (tick one)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely committed               | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat committed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither committed nor uncommitted | <input type="checkbox"/> Not very committed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not committed at all              |   |

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**22. In general, how committed is your company to the retention of apprentices after the training period? (tick one)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely committed               | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat committed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither committed nor uncommitted | <input type="checkbox"/> Not very committed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not committed at all              |   |

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**23. In general, what proportion of your apprentices complete their apprenticeship term? (tick one)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All or almost all | <input type="checkbox"/> about 75%         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About half        | <input type="checkbox"/> about 25% or less |

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**24. Is the formal training provided by the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or RTOs (including TAFE) for your apprentices: (tick as many as apply)**

*Note: This question does not apply to training provided by you, the employer. It applies to what the RTO and its staff does.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Off the job day release at the RTO  | <input type="checkbox"/> On-the-job training with some formal training sessions in a training room |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Off-the-job block release (e.g. 1 week every two months) at the RTO, that they can travel to daily? | <input type="checkbox"/> On-the-job with no formal training sessions in a training room            |

Off-the-job block release (e.g. 1 week every two months) at the RTO, that they have to stay away from home to attend?

Other (please give details)

---

---

## Section 2: Job obligations, commitments and expectations

This section asks you about your expectations of the obligations and commitments that might apply during the course of an apprenticeship. It relates both to what you expect of your workers and to what you feel you are expected to contribute.

**Notes:** In this section,

- The word 'company' is taken to apply to other types of organisations as well as commercial firms
- Please use the n/a (not applicable column) for anything you feel is irrelevant to you and your apprentices

### 25. The obligations and commitments of the employer: How important are they?

During apprenticeships, I believe it is important **for our company as the employer** to:

<i>Please circle one number on the scale on each line</i>		Obligation is not at all important	←————→	Obligation is extremely important								
1	Talk with the apprentice about matters which affect him/her	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Help the apprentice develop his/her career	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	Be particularly considerate of long-serving employees	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Provide the apprentice with support in personal problems	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Provide the apprentice with the resources required to do his/her work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Make sure the apprentice is given a job that he/she likes	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Make sure the apprentice's performance appraisal is fair	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	Treat the apprentice the same as everyone else with respect to rules and discipline	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	Help the apprentice gain promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Give the apprentice adequate training for the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Allow the apprentice time off to meet personal/family needs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	Act in a supportive way towards the apprentice	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

### 26. Please note any other obligations or commitments that you believe a company as the employer, has towards the apprentice during the apprenticeship.

### 27. The obligations and commitments to the apprentice: How well, in general, are they met by your company?

During the period of an apprenticeship, we generally meet our obligation to:

<i>Please circle one number on the scale on each line</i>		Obligation is not at all met	←————→	Obligation is completely met									
1	Talk with the apprentice about matters which affect him/her	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
2	Help the apprentice develop his/her career	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
3	Be particularly considerate of long-serving employees	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
4	Provide the apprentice with support regarding personal problems	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
5	Provide the apprentice with the resources required to do his/her work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
6	Make sure the apprentice is given a job that he/she likes	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
7	Make sure the apprentice's performance appraisal is fair	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
8	Treat the apprentice the same as everyone with respect to rules and discipline	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
9	Help the apprentice gain promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
10	Give the apprentice adequate training for the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
11	Allow the apprentice time off to meet personal/family needs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

12	Act in a supportive way towards the apprentice	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
----	--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----

***If the company did not meet its obligations (eg a score of less than 5 on one or more measures) what do you think the consequences would be?***

---

---



**28. The apprentice's obligations and commitments to your company as the employer: How important are they?**

During the period of an apprenticeship, I believe it is important that apprentices:

<i>Please circle one number on the scale on each line</i>		Obligation is not at all important	←————→	Obligation is extremely important								
1	Stay with the employer until the end of the apprenticeship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Protect the reputation of the employing company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	Put the interests of the employer first at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Be open with the supervisor / employer about things affecting work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Always be loyal to the employing company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Do non-required tasks which make the place run more smoothly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Refuse to support the employers' competitors	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	Spend a minimum of two years with the employer after completion of the apprenticeship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	Work more hours than they are contracted to work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Be willing to accept a transfer	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Refuse to give outsiders any company information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	Become more skilled at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13	Work well with others	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14	Put in a full day's work for a full day's pay	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
15	Attend work every day when scheduled	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
16	Always be punctual for work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**29. Please note any other obligations or commitments that you believe apprentices have to your company as the employer during the apprenticeship.**

**30. The apprentice's obligations and commitments to you as the employer: How well in general have your apprentices met them?**

*Note: Naturally, these answers may be affected by the length of time your apprentices have been employed.*

During their apprenticeship, our apprentices, in general, meet their obligation to:

<i>Please circle one number on the scale on each line</i>		Obligation is not at all met	←————→	Obligation is completely met									
1	Stay with the employer until the end of the apprenticeship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
2	Protect the reputation of the employing company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
3	Put the interests of the employer first at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
4	Be open with the supervisor / employer about things affecting work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
5	Always be loyal to the employing company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
6	Do non-required tasks which make the place run more smoothly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
7	Refuse to support the employers' competitors	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
8	Spend a minimum of two years with the employer after completion of the apprenticeship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
9	Work more hours than they are contracted to work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
10	Be willing to accept a transfer	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
11	Refuse to give outsiders any company information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
12	Become more skilled at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
13	Work well with others	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
14	Put in a full day's work for a full day's pay	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

15	Attend work every day when scheduled	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
16	Always be punctual for work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

***If the apprentice did not meet his or her obligations (eg a score of less than 5 on one or more measures) what do you think the consequences would be?***

---



---

### Section 3: Training obligations, commitments and expectations

This section asks you about expectations of training that occurs during the course of an apprenticeship. It relates both to what is provided by the Registered Training Organisation and what is provided by you as the employer.

**Notes:** In this section,

- (i) The word 'company' is taken to apply to other organisations as well, eg a government department.
- (ii) Please use the n/a (not applicable column) for anything you feel is irrelevant to your apprentices and their apprenticeship.

#### 31. Training obligations and commitments: How important are they?

During the apprenticeship, I believe it is important that the apprentice receives training that involves:

<i>Please circle one number on the scale on each line</i>		This element is not at all important	←————→	This element is extremely important								
1	An identified person as the apprenticeship contact in both the RTO and the company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Exposure to different processes / experiences in the job (not just repetitive or low-level work)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	A range of methods of training, both on and off the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Assessment that is not too easy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Assessment that is not too hard	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Assessment that is regular (ie takes place regularly)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Assessment that involves written and/or verbal feedback	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	The opportunity to keep learning new things	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	Specific time set aside for training, not just working	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Opportunities for the apprentice to apply what s/he has learned	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

#### 32. Please note any other training-related obligations or commitments that you believe you as the employing company and the RTO have towards the apprentice during the apprenticeship.

#### 33. Training obligations and commitments: How well are they generally met for apprentices working in your company?

During the apprenticeship, the RTO and we as the employing company, generally meet the obligations to provide apprentices with training that involves:

<i>Please circle one number on the scale on each line</i>		Obligations are not at all met	←————→	Obligations are completely met									
1	An identified person as the apprenticeship contact in both the RTO and the company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
2	Exposure to different processes / experiences in the job (not just repetitive or low-level work)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
3	A range of methods of training, both on and off the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
4	Assessment that is not too easy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
5	Assessment that is not too hard	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
6	Assessment that is regular (ie takes place regularly)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
7	Assessment that involves written and/or verbal feedback	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
8	The opportunity to keep learning new things	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
9	Specific time set aside for training, not just working	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
10	Opportunities for the apprentice to apply what s/he has	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

	learned														
11	Opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a		

**If the company and/or RTO did not meet its training obligations (eg a score of less than 5 on one or more measures) what do you think the consequences would be?**

---

**Section 4: Reading, writing and maths expectations**

This section asks you about your expectations of the literacy and numeracy (reading, writing and maths) demands placed on your apprentices.

**34. Do your apprentices generally read their apprenticeship contract when they start their apprenticeship?**  
 Yes     No     Don't know

**If yes, how difficult is it generally for them to read and understand their apprenticeship contract when they start their apprenticeship?**

<i>Please circle one number on each line</i>		Not difficult at all					Extremely Difficult
1	Difficulty reading the contract	1	2	3	4	5	
2	Difficulty understanding the contract	1	2	3	4	5	

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**35. How difficult do you think your apprentices expect their training to be in terms of:**

<i>Please circle one number on each line</i>		Not difficult at all					Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5	
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5	

**36. How difficult do your apprentices generally find their training to be in terms of:**

<i>Please circle one number on each line</i>		Not difficult at all					Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5	
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5	

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**37. How difficult do you think your apprentices expect their daily work to be in terms of:**

<i>Please circle one number on each line</i>		Not difficult at all					Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5	
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5	

**38. How difficult do your apprentices generally find their daily work to be in terms of:**

<i>Please circle one number on each line</i>		Not difficult at all					Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5	

2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5
---	------------------------	---	---	---	---	---

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**End of survey**

***Please note the time the survey took to complete: ..... minutes***

***Thank you for completing this survey! Don't forget to fill in the small yellow form if you would like to be in the prize draw. Please return your survey by June 2nd to be eligible for the draw.***

**If you have mislaid the reply paid envelope, the return address is:  
NCVER Apprentice Project, Reply Paid 169, Fairfield VIC 3078. No stamp is required.**

# Appendix 2c: Questionnaire for survey of GTO-employed apprentices and trainees



# A University of Ballarat research study

Funded by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research

## Your apprenticeship/traineeship: What are the mutual commitments?

Please answer this survey for the apprenticeship/traineeship in which you are currently enrolled. If you are doing more than one apprenticeship or traineeship, please answer for the one you started first. If you prefer not to answer any questions, simply leave them out.

### Section 1: About you, your apprenticeship/traineeship and your host company

1. **What is your age?** .....

2. **Are you (tick one)?**

Male

Female

3. **Do any of the following apply to you? (tick as many as are relevant)**

You are Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander

English is not the main language spoken in your home

English is the main language spoken at home but at least one of your parents was born in a non-English speaking country

4. **Do you work in a: (tick one only)**

Capital city (i.e. Melbourne or Brisbane)

Regional city (more than 10,000 population)

Small town (500 -10,000 population)

Remote area (in town less than 500 or outside town)

5. **Is your contract of training an apprenticeship or a traineeship? (tick one)**

An apprenticeship

A traineeship

Not sure which

6. **What qualification will you have as a result of finishing the apprenticeship/traineeship? (tick one)**

Certificate II

Certificate III

Certificate IV

Other

Don't know

.....

7. **How long have you been working as an apprentice or trainee in this qualification? (tick one)**

Less than 3 months

12 months to less than 2 years

7 to less than 12 months

3 years plus

2 years to less than 3 years

3 to less than 6 months

8. **Had you been working for this host company before starting the apprenticeship/traineeship?**

- Yes  No

**If yes, for how long?** (tick one)

- Less than 6 months  6 months to less than 1 year  
 1 year to less than 2 years  2 years plus

9. **How long did you expect the apprenticeship/traineeship to last altogether (from when you started it)?** (tick one)

- Less than 12 months  12 months to less than 2 years  
 2 years to less than 3 years  3 years plus

10. **Are you employed:** (tick one)

- Full time permanent?  Part time permanent?  
 Casual?

**If part-time or casual, are you still at secondary school?**

- Yes  No

**If yes, is your apprenticeship/traineeship linked to your secondary school study?**

- Yes  No

11. **Is your apprenticeship or traineeship your main activity? (for example you may also be studying at university, or have another job)** (tick one)

- Yes  No

12. **Is the formal training provided by the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) (including TAFE )** (tick one):

**Note:** This question does not apply to training provided by your employer. It applies to what the RTO and its staff does.

- Off-the-job day release at the RTO?  On-the-job with some formal training sessions in a training room  
 Off-the-job block release (e.g. 1 week every two months) at the RTO, that you can travel to daily?  On-the-job with no formal training sessions in a training room  
 Off-the-job block release (e.g. 1 week every two months) at the RTO, that you have to stay away from home to attend?  Other (please give details).....  
.....

13. **When you started your apprenticeship/traineeship, how committed were you to a long-term career in this occupation or industry?** (tick one)

- Extremely committed  Somewhat committed  
 Neither committed nor uncommitted  I did not want a long-term career in this industry area



**14. What is the nature of your employment as an apprentice or trainee? (tick one only):**  
**Note:** A Group Training Organisation is a company which acts as your legal employer and pays you, but places you with a 'host company' to do your work)

- I am employed directly by a company and have only worked for one company as an apprentice or trainee
- I am employed directly by a company and have worked for two or more companies as an apprentice or trainee
- I am employed by a Group Training Organisation and have only worked for one host company as an apprentice or trainee
- I am employed by a Group Training Organisation and have worked for two or more host companies
- Unsure
- Other. Please give details.....

**15. In what sort of industry is the apprenticeship or traineeship? (tick one)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farming, forestry, fishing                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing and engineering (in a factory or similar)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Building including electrical and plumbing   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transport   | <input type="checkbox"/> Retailing (shop work)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hairdressing and beauty                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Food processing  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fast food, cafes, restaurants & accommodation             | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural, recreational or sporting   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Banking / real estate / insurance                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Clerical / administration  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government administration including education and defence | <input type="checkbox"/> Health, personal and community services (including aged care and child care centres) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications / media / computing                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Automotive (e.g. mechanic / panel beater)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details)<br>.....                      |   |

**16. Have you previously undertaken a pre-apprenticeship in the same industry area?**  
**Note:** These are available only in certain trade areas. (tick one)

- Yes  No

**17. How big is the company or organisation for which you work?**

**Note:** If you are employed by a Group Training Organisation, please answer for the host company, i.e. the company in which you are currently placed. (tick one)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A small single site, with fewer than 20 employees | <input type="checkbox"/> A medium single site, with between 21 and 100 employees    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A large single site, with 101 or more employees   | <input type="checkbox"/> A multi-site company (a company with more than one branch) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know  |   |

**18. Is there an active trade union at your workplace that represents people doing the type of work that you do?**

**Note:** If the trade union is active, you may see notices about union meetings, or there may be a trade union representative that talks to staff one to one. (tick one)

- Yes  No  Don't know

## Section 2: Job obligations, commitments and expectations

This section asks you about your expectations of the obligations and commitments that might apply during the course of an apprenticeship/traineeship. It relates both to what you expect from your employer and to what you feel you are expected to contribute.

**Notes:** In this section, (i) The word 'company' is taken to apply to other organisations as well, eg if you work for a government department. (ii) If you are employed by a Group Training Organisation, please answer for the host employer, i.e. the company in which you are currently placed) (iii) Please use the n/a (not applicable column) for anything you feel is irrelevant to you and your apprenticeship/traineeship.

### 19. *The obligations and commitments of your employer (i.e. the company that you work for) to you: How important are they?*

During my apprenticeship/traineeship I believe it is important for my host company to:

Please circle one number on the scale on each line		Obligation is not at all important ←————→ Obligation is extremely important										
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Talk with me about matters which affect me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Help me develop my career	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	Be particularly considerate of long-serving employees	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Provide me with support regarding personal problems	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Provide the resources required to do my work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Make sure I am given a job that I like	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Make sure my performance appraisal is fair	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	Treat me the same as everyone with respect to rules and discipline	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	Help me gain promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Give me adequate training for the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Allow me time off to meet personal or family needs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	Act in a supportive way towards me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

### 20. *Please note any other obligations or commitments that you believe your host company has towards you during the apprenticeship/traineeship.*

.....  
 .....

### 21. *Have your expectations of your employer's obligations or commitments changed since starting your apprenticeship/traineeship? (tick one)*

Yes     No

**If yes, please explain, if you wish, how your expectations have changed**

.....  
 .....

**22. Employer obligations and commitments to you: How well have they been met?**

*Note: Naturally, these answers may be affected by the length of time you have been employed in that job*

**During my apprenticeship/traineeship, my host company has, so far, met their obligation to:**

*Please circle one number on the scale on each line*

		Obligation is not at all met	←————→										Obligation is completely met
1	Talk with me about matters which affect me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
2	Help me develop my career	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
3	Be particularly considerate of long-serving employees	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
4	Provide me with support regarding personal problems	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
5	Provide the resources required to do my work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
6	Make sure I am given a job that I like	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
7	Make sure my performance appraisal is fair	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
8	Treat me the same as everyone with respect to rules and discipline	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
9	Help me gain promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
10	Give me adequate training for the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
11	Allow me time off to meet personal or family needs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
12	Act in a supportive way towards me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

**23. Your obligations and commitments to your host company: How important are they?**

**During my apprenticeship / traineeship, I believe it is important that I:**

*Please circle one number on the scale on each line*

		Obligation is not at all important	←————→										Obligation is extremely important
1	Stay with my present host until the end of my apprenticeship/traineeship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2	Protect the reputation of my host company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
3	Put the interests of my host company first at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
4	Be open with my supervisor / employer about things affecting work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
5	Always be loyal to my host company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6	Do non-required tasks which make the place run more smoothly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
7	Refuse to support my hosts' competitors	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
8	Spend a minimum of two years with my present host after completion of my apprenticeship/ traineeship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
9	Work more hours than I am contracted to work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
10	Be willing to accept a transfer	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	Refuse to give outsiders any company information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
12	Become more skilled at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
13	Work well with others	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
14	Put in a full day's work for a full day's pay	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
15	Attend work every day when scheduled	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
16	Always be punctual for work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

**24. Please note any other obligations or commitments that you believe you have to your host company during the apprenticeship/traineeship.**

.....  
 .....

**25. Your obligations and commitments to your host company: How well have you met them?**

**Note:** Naturally, these answers may be affected by the length of time you have been employed in that job.

**During my apprenticeship/traineeship, I have, so far, met my obligation to:**

Please circle one number on the scale on each line

		Obligation is not at all met	←—————→										Obligation is completely met
1	Stay with my present host company until the end of my apprenticeship/traineeship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
2	Protect the reputation of my host company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
3	Put the interests of my host company first at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
4	Be open with my supervisor / host company about things affecting work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
5	Always be loyal to my host company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
6	Do non-required tasks which make the place run more smoothly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
7	Refuse to support my host company's competitors	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
8	<b>This question has been omitted as it is not relevant at this stage in your job</b>												n/a
9	Work more hours than I am contracted to work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
10	Be willing to accept a transfer	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
11	Refuse to give outsiders any company information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
12	Become more skilled at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
13	Work well with others	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
14	Put in a full day's work for a full day's pay	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
15	Attend work every day when scheduled	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
16	Always be punctual for work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

**26. If you answered in Question 14 that you are employed by a Group Training Organisation, please answer the following two questions. Otherwise go to Question 27.**

**Who has the major responsibility for the commitments and obligations that you feel are due to you? (tick one)**

- Your Group Training Organisation
  Your host company  
 Both equally

**Does being employed by a Group Training Organisation provide a different experience from being directly employed by a host company? (tick one)**

- Yes
  No  
 Makes no difference
  Don't know

Please add any comments if you wish .....

.....

### Section 3: Training obligations, commitments and expectations

This section asks you about your expectations of the training that applies during the course of an apprenticeship/traineeship. It relates both to what is provided by your Registered Training Organisation and what is provided by your host company.

**Notes:** In this section, (i) The word 'company' is taken to apply to other organisations as well, eg if you work for a government department. (ii) If you are employed by a Group Training Organisation, please answer for the host company, i.e. the company in which you are currently placed) (iii) Please use the n/a (not applicable column) for anything you feel is irrelevant to you and your apprenticeship/traineeship.

#### 27. Training obligations and commitments: How important are they?

**During my apprenticeship/traineeship, I believe that it is important that I receive training that involves:**

Please circle one number on the scale on each line

		This element is not at all important	←—————→										This element is extremely important
1	An identified person as my apprenticeship/traineeship contact in both the RTO and the company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2	Exposure to different processes / experiences in my job (not just repetitive or low-level work)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
3	A range of methods of training, both on and off the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
4	Assessment that is not too easy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
5	Assessment that is not too hard	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6	Assessment that is regular	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
7	Assessment that involves written and/or verbal feedback	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
8	The opportunity to keep learning new things	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
9	Specific time set aside for training, not just working	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
10	Opportunities to apply what I have learned	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	Opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

#### 28. Please note any other training-related obligations or commitments that you believe your employing company and RTO have towards you during the apprenticeship/traineeship:

.....  
 .....

#### 29. Training obligations and commitments: How well have they been met?

**Note:** Naturally, these answers may be affected by the length of time you have been employed in that job.

**During my apprenticeship/traineeship, my RTO and my employing company have, so far, met their obligation to provide me with training that involves:**

Please circle one number on the scale on each line

		Expectations are not at all met	←—————→										Expectations are completely met
1	An identified person as my apprenticeship/traineeship contact in both the RTO and the company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
2	Exposure to different processes / experiences in my job (not just repetitive or low-level work)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
3	A range of methods of training, both on and off the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
4	Assessment that is not too easy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
5	Assessment that is not too hard	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
6	Assessment that is regular	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
7	Assessment that involves written and/or verbal feedback	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
8	The opportunity to keep learning new things	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
9	Specific time set aside for training, not just working	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
10	Opportunities to apply what I have learned	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
11	Opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

## Section 4: Reading, writing and maths expectations

This section asks you about your expectations of the literacy and numeracy (reading, writing and maths) involved with your apprenticeship/traineeship.

30. Did you read your apprenticeship/traineeship contract when you started your apprenticeship/traineeship?

Yes

No

**If yes, how difficult was it to read and understand your apprenticeship/traineeship contract when you started your apprenticeship / traineeship?**

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←—————→			Extremely difficult
1	Difficulty reading my contract	1	2	3	4	5
2	Difficulty understanding my contract	1	2	3	4	5

Please add any comments if you wish .....

31. How difficult did you expect your training to be in terms of:

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←—————→			Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5

32. How difficult have you found your training to be in terms of:

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←—————→			Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5

Please add any comments if you wish .....

33. How difficult did you expect your daily work to be in terms of:

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←—————→			Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5

34. How difficult have you found your daily work to be in terms of:

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←—————→			Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5

Please add any comments if you wish .....

**Thank you for completing this survey! Please return to your GTO in accordance with local arrangements.**

**Don't forget to fill in the small yellow form if you would like to be in the prize draw.**



# Appendix 2d: Questionnaire for survey of GTOs-as-employers





**Section 1: About you, your GTO and the apprentices in the GTO**

**1. In which State are you located?**

- Queensland  Victoria

**2. What is your role in the GTO?** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. How long have you been working in this GTO?**

- Up to two years  Two years or more \_\_\_\_\_ (state no.)

**4. Have you yourself ever undertaken an apprenticeship or traineeship (tick any that apply)?**

- Apprenticeship  Traineeship

**5. Is the GTO site at which you work in a: (tick one only)**

- Capital city (i.e. Melbourne or Brisbane)  Small town (500 – 10,000 population)  
 Regional city (more than 10,000 population)  Remote area (town less than 500 or outside town)

**6. Is your GTO single or multi-site? (tick one only)**

- One site only  More than one site but only one State/Territory  
 More than one site and more than one State/Territory

**7. Would you describe your GTO primarily as an industry-based GTO or a multi-industry GTO? (tick one only)**

- Industry-based  Multi-industry

**8. Please indicate whether you normally pay apprentices the relevant award rate of pay (which is a discounted rate applicable to those in apprenticeships and traineeships), or above that rate.**

- The award rate  Above the award rate  
 Don't know  Prefer not to say

**9. How many apprentices on average does your GTO recruit in a normal year? (tick one)**

- Fewer than five  5 – 19  
 Between 20 and 99  100 -499  
 500-999  1000+

**10. How often on average does your GTO recruit apprentices? (tick one)**

- Continuously (more often than once a month)  
 Occasionally (less than once a month but more than once a year)  
 Once a year  
 Less often than once a year

**11. What qualification levels are your GTO's apprentices offered? (tick all that apply)**

- Certificate II  Certificate III  
 Certificate IV  Diploma  
 Other (please specify)

**12. In general, how long do the apprenticeships last for? (tick one)**

- 12 months to less than 2 years                       2 years to less than 3 years  
 3 years plus     Other

Please give further details if you like

---

**13. Are your apprentices employed: (tick all that apply)**

- Full-time permanently?                       Part-time permanently?                       Casually?

**13 (a) In general, what proportion of your apprentices are still at secondary school?**

- All     Between half and all  
 One or more, but fewer than half                       None

**13 (b) For apprentices that are still at secondary school, what proportion (approximately) are formally School-Based (ie their apprenticeship is linked to their school studies)?**

- All     Between half and all  
 One or more, but fewer than half                       None

**14. In general, what proportion of apprentices have done apprenticeships or traineeships with you before their present one?**

- All     Between half and all  
 Fewer than half but at least a few                       None

**15. In what sort of industries are your host companies? (tick all that apply)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farming, forestry, fishing                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing and engineering                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Building including electrical and plumbing  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transport   | <input type="checkbox"/> Retailing (shop work)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hairdressing and beauty                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Food processing   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fast food, cafes, restaurants & accommodation             | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural, recreational or sporting  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Banking / real estate / insurance                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Clerical / administration   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government Administration including education and defence | <input type="checkbox"/> Health, personal and community services (including aged care and child care services) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications / media / computing                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Automotive (e.g. mechanic / panel beater)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details) _____                         |  |
- 

**16. In general, how choosy (selective) would you say you can be in selecting apprentices? (tick one) (Please note we understand that labour market conditions may affect your 'choosiness'; we ask you to answer for how choosy you ARE, rather than how choosy you would LIKE to be)**

- Very choosy     Somewhat choosy  
 Not very choosy     Not choosy at all

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**17. In general, what recruitment and selection techniques do you use when selecting apprentices? (tick as many as apply)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application form              | <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation from existing employees                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interview                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Selection or 'assessment' centre with a range of methods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paid trial as ordinary worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Unpaid trial   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Probation period              | <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-apprenticeship courses                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aptitude test                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy and/or numeracy test                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-employment medical tests  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other  |

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**18. In general, when they start their apprenticeships, how committed do you think the apprentices you recruit are to a long-term career in the relevant occupation or industry? (tick one)**

- Extremely committed
- Somewhat committed
- Neither committed nor uncommitted
- Not very committed
- Not committed at all
- We don't recruit from outside the company
- Don't know

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**19. In general, how committed are your host companies to the recruitment and training of apprentices? (tick one)**

- Extremely committed
- Somewhat committed
- Neither committed nor uncommitted
- Not very committed
- Not committed at all

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**20. In general, after the end of the training period, how likely are your host companies to employ apprentices they have been hosting? (tick one)**

- Extremely committed
- Somewhat committed
- Neither committed nor uncommitted
- Not very committed
- Not committed at all

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**21. In general, what proportion of your apprentices complete their apprenticeship term? (tick one)**

- All or almost all
- about 75%
- About half
- about 25% or less

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**22. Is your GTO also a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)?**

- Yes
- No

---

**23. Is the formal training provided by the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) (your own or others) or RTOs (including TAFE) for your apprentices: (tick as many as apply)**

*Note: This question does not apply to the on-the-job or other training provided by the host employer. It applies to what the RTO and its staff does.*

- Off the job day release at the RTO
- On-the-job training with some formal training sessions in a training room
- Off-the-job block release (e.g. 1 week every two months) at the RTO, that they can travel to daily?
- On-the-job with no formal training sessions in a training room
- Off-the-job block release (e.g. 1 week every two months) at the RTO, that they have to stay away from home to attend?
- Other (please give details) .....

**Section 2: Job obligations, commitments and expectations**

**This section asks you about your expectations of the obligations and commitments that might apply during the course of an apprenticeship. It relates both to the GTO and to the host company, so some sets of questions are repeated.**

**Notes:**

- (i) In this section, please use the n/a (not applicable) column, where provided, for anything you feel is irrelevant to you and your apprentices.
- (ii) We understand that it is difficult to give a 'general' answer for your host companies. Please omit any questions where you consider yourself unable to do this meaningfully.
- (iii) Some items in the questions containing 'scales' are marked '*This line is internationally blank*'. This is where we have removed items that relate to 'ordinary employers' and do not readily apply to GTOs. We have retained the line to keep common numbering between the GTO survey and our 'ordinary employer' survey.

**24. Who has the major responsibility for the job-related commitments and obligations that you feel are due to the apprentice? (tick one)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Group Training Organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> The host company |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Both equally                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other            |

Please add any comments if you wish .....

**25. Does being employed by a Group Training Organisation provide a different experience for apprentices from being directly employed by a company? (tick one)**

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes                 | <input type="checkbox"/> No    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Makes no difference | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Please add any comments if you wish .....

**26. The obligations and commitments of the GTO: How important are they?**

During apprenticeships, I believe it is important **for our GTO as the employer** to:

<i>Please circle one number on the scale on each line</i>		Obligation is not at all important	←————→	Obligation is extremely important								
1	Talk with the apprentice about matters which affect him/her	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Help the apprentice develop his/her career	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	<i>This line is intentionally blank</i>											
4	Provide the apprentice with support in personal problems	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Provide the apprentice with the resources required to do his/her work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Make sure the apprentice is given a job that he/she likes	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Make sure the apprentice's performance appraisal is fair	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	Treat the apprentice the same as everyone else with respect to rules and discipline	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	Help the apprentice gain promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Give the apprentice adequate training for the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Allow the apprentice time off to meet personal/family needs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	Act in a supportive way towards the apprentice	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**27. Please note any other obligations or commitments that you believe the GTO, as the employer, has towards the apprentice during the apprenticeship.**

.....

.....

---

---

**28. The obligations and commitments to the apprentice: How well, in general, are they met by the GTO?**

During the period of an apprenticeship, we generally meet our obligation to:

<i>Please circle one number on the scale on each line</i>		Obligation is not at all met	←————→	Obligation is completely met									
1	Talk with the apprentice about matters which affect him/her	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
2	Help the apprentice develop his/her career	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
3	<i>This line is intentionally blank</i>												
4	Provide the apprentice with support regarding personal problems	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
5	Provide the apprentice with the resources required to do his/her work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
6	Make sure the apprentice is given a job that he/she likes	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
7	Make sure the apprentice's performance appraisal is fair	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
8	Treat the apprentice the same as everyone with respect to rules and discipline	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
9	Help the apprentice gain promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
10	Give the apprentice adequate training for the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
11	Allow the apprentice time off to meet personal/family needs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
12	Act in a supportive way towards the apprentice	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

***If the GTO did not meet its obligations (eg a score of less than 5 on one or more measures) what do you think the consequences would be?***

.....

.....

**29. The apprentice's obligations and commitments to your GTO as the employer: How important are they?**

During the period of an apprenticeship, I believe it is important that apprentices:

<i>Please circle one number on the scale on each line</i>		Obligation is not at all important	←————→	Obligation is extremely important								
1	Stay with the GTO until the end of the apprenticeship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Protect the reputation of the GTO	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	<i>This line is intentionally blank</i>											
4	Be open with the field worker about things affecting work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Always be loyal to the GTO	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	<i>This line is intentionally blank</i>											
7	Refuse to support the GTO's competitors	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	<i>This line is intentionally blank</i>											
9	Work more hours than they are contracted to work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Be willing to accept a transfer	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	<i>This line is intentionally blank</i>											
12	Become more skilled at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13	Work well with others	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14	Put in a full day's work for a full day's pay	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
15	Attend work every day when scheduled	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
16	Always be punctual for work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**30. Please note any other obligations or commitments that you believe apprentices have to your GTO as the employer during the apprenticeship.**

---

---



**31. The apprentice's obligations and commitments to the GTO as the employer: How well in general have your apprentices met them?**

**Note:** Naturally, these answers may be affected by the length of time your apprentices have been employed.

During their apprenticeship, our apprentices, in general, meet their obligation to:

<i>Please circle one number on the scale on each line</i>		Obligation is not at all met	←————→	Obligation is completely met									
1	Stay with the GTO until the end of the apprenticeship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
2	Protect the reputation of the GTO	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
3	<i>This line is intentionally blank</i>												
4	Be open with the field worker about things affecting work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
5	Always be loyal to the GTO	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
6	<i>This line is intentionally blank</i>												
7	Refuse to support the GTO's competitors	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
8	<i>This line is intentionally blank</i>												
9	Work more hours than they are contracted to work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
10	Be willing to accept a transfer	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
11	<i>This line is intentionally blank</i>												
12	Become more skilled at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
13	Work well with others	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
14	Put in a full day's work for a full day's pay	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
15	Attend work every day when scheduled	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
16	Always be punctual for work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

**If the apprentice did not meet his or her obligations (eg a score of less than 5 on one or more measures) what do you think the consequences would be?**

.....

.....

**32. The obligations and commitments of the host company: How important are they?**

During apprenticeships, I believe it is important **for the host company** to:

<i>Please circle one number on the scale on each line</i>		Obligation is not at all important	←————→	Obligation is extremely important								
1	Talk with the apprentice about matters which affect him/her	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Help the apprentice develop his/her career	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	<i>This line is intentionally blank</i>											
4	Provide the apprentice with support in personal problems	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Provide the apprentice with the resources required to do his/her work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Make sure the apprentice is given a job that he/she likes	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Make sure the apprentice's performance appraisal is fair	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	Treat the apprentice the same as everyone else with respect to rules and discipline	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	<i>This line is intentionally blank</i>											
10	Give the apprentice adequate training for the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Allow the apprentice time off to meet personal/family needs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	Act in a supportive way towards the apprentice	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**33. Please note any other obligations or commitments that you believe the host company has towards the**

***apprentice during the apprenticeship.***

---

---

---

---

**34. The obligations and commitments to the apprentice: How well, in general, are they met by the host company?**

During the period of an apprenticeship, our host companies generally meet their obligation to:

Please circle one number on the scale on each line

		Obligation is not at all met	←————→										Obligation is completely met
1	Talk with the apprentice about matters which affect him/her	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
2	Help the apprentice develop his/her career	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
3	<i>This line is intentionally blank</i>												
4	Provide the apprentice with support regarding personal problems	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
5	Provide the apprentice with the resources required to do his/her work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
6	Make sure the apprentice is given a job that he/she likes	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
7	Make sure the apprentice's performance appraisal is fair	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
8	Treat the apprentice the same as everyone with respect to rules and discipline	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
9	<i>This line is intentionally blank</i>												
10	Give the apprentice adequate training for the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
11	Allow the apprentice time off to meet personal/family needs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
12	Act in a supportive way towards the apprentice	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

**35. If the host company did not meet its obligations (eg a score of less than 5 on one or more measures) what do you think the consequences would be?**

---

**36. The apprentice's obligations and commitments to the host company: How important are they?**

During the period of an apprenticeship, I believe it is important that apprentices:

Please circle one number on the scale on each line

		Obligation is not at all important	←————→										Obligation is extremely important
1	Stay with the host company until the end of the placement	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2	Protect the reputation of the host company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
3	Put the interests of the host company first at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
4	Be open with the supervisor / employer about things affecting work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
5	Always be loyal to the host company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6	Do non-required tasks which make the place run more smoothly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
7	Refuse to support the host company's competitors	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
8	If offered a job by the host company after completion of the apprenticeship, stay for a minimum of two years	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
9	Work more hours than they are contracted to work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
10	Be willing to accept a transfer	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	Refuse to give outsiders any company information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
12	Become more skilled at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
13	Work well with others	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

14	Put in a full day's work for a full day's pay	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
15	Attend work every day when scheduled	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
16	Always be punctual for work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**37. Please note any other obligations or commitments that you believe apprentices have to the host company during the apprenticeship.**

---



---

**38. The apprentice's obligations and commitments to the host company: How well in general have your apprentices met them?**

**Note:** Naturally, these answers may be affected by the length of time your apprentices have been employed.

During their apprenticeship, our apprentices, in general, meet their obligation to:

Please circle one number on the scale on each line

		Obligation is not at all met											Obligation is completely met
1	Stay with the host company until the end of the placement	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
2	Protect the reputation of the host company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
3	Put the interests of the host company first at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
4	Be open with the supervisor / employer about things affecting work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
5	Always be loyal to the host company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
6	Do non-required tasks which make the place run more smoothly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
7	Refuse to support the host company's competitors	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
8	If offered a job by the host company after completion of the apprenticeship, stay for a minimum of two years	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
9	Work more hours than they are contracted to work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
10	Be willing to accept a transfer	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
11	Refuse to give outsiders any company information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
12	Become more skilled at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
13	Work well with others	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
14	Put in a full day's work for a full day's pay	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
15	Attend work every day when scheduled	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
16	Always be punctual for work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

**39. If the apprentice did not meet his or her obligations (eg a score of less than 5 on one or more measures) what do you think the consequences would be?**

---



---

**Section 3: Training obligations, commitments and expectations**

This section asks you about expectations of training that occurs during the course of an apprenticeship. It relates to what is provided by the Registered Training Organisation, what is provided by the GTO and what is provided by the host company.

**Notes:** In this section, please use the n/a (not applicable column) for anything you feel is irrelevant to your apprentices and their apprenticeship.

**40. Apart from the RTO, who has the major responsibility for the ‘company’ training commitments and obligations that you feel are due to the apprentice? (tick one)**

- The Group Training Organisation                       The host company  
 Both equally     Other

Please add any comments if you wish .....

.....

**41. Does being employed by a Group Training Organisation provide a different training experience for apprentices from being directly employed by a company? (tick one)**

- Yes     No  
 Makes no difference     Other

Please add any comments if you wish .....

.....

**42. Training obligations and commitments: How important are they?**

During the apprenticeship, I believe it is important that the apprentice receives training that involves:

Please circle one number on the scale on each line		This element is not at all important ←————→ This element is extremely important										
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	An identified person as the apprenticeship contact in the RTO, the GTO and the host company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Exposure to different processes / experiences in the job (not just repetitive or low-level work)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	A range of methods of training, both on and off the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Assessment that is not too easy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Assessment that is not too hard	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Assessment that is regular (ie takes place regularly)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Assessment that involves written and/or verbal feedback	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	The opportunity to keep learning new things	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	Specific time set aside for training, not just working	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Opportunities for the apprentice to apply what s/he has learned	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**43. Please note any other training-related obligations or commitments that you believe the GTO, the host company and the RTO have towards the apprentice during the apprenticeship.**

.....

.....

.....

**44. Training obligations and commitments: How well are they generally met for apprentices working for the GTO?**

During the apprenticeship, the RTO, the GTO and the host employer, generally meet the obligations to provide apprentices with training that involves:

*Please circle one number on the scale on each line*

		Obligations are not at all met	←—————→										Obligations are completely met
1	An identified person as the apprenticeship contact in the RTO, the GTO and the host company	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
2	Exposure to different processes / experiences in the job (not just repetitive or low-level work)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
3	A range of methods of training, both on and off the job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
4	Assessment that is not too easy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
5	Assessment that is not too hard	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
6	Assessment that is regular (ie takes place regularly)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
7	Assessment that involves written and/or verbal feedback	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
8	The opportunity to keep learning new things	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
9	Specific time set aside for training, not just working	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
10	Opportunities for the apprentice to apply what s/he has learned	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a
11	Opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	n/a

**45. If the GTO, the host company and/or the RTO did not meet its training obligations (eg a score of less than 5 on one or more measures) what do you think the consequences would be?**

---



---

**Section 4: Reading, writing and maths expectations**

This section asks you about your expectations of the literacy and numeracy (reading, writing and maths) demands placed on your apprentices.

**46. Do your apprentices generally read their apprenticeship contract when they start their apprenticeship?**

- Yes  No  Don't know

**If yes, how difficult is it generally for them to read and understand their apprenticeship contract when they start their apprenticeship?**

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←————→			Extremely Difficult
1	Difficulty reading the contract	1	2	3	4	5
2	Difficulty understanding the contract	1	2	3	4	5

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**47. How difficult do you think your apprentices expect their training to be in terms of:**

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←————→			Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5

**48. How difficult do your apprentices generally find their training to be in terms of:**

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←————→			Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**49. How difficult do you think your apprentices expect their daily work to be in terms of:**

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←————→			Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5

**50. How difficult do your apprentices generally find their daily work to be in terms of:**

Please circle one number on each line		Not difficult at all	←————→			Extremely difficult
1	Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5
2	Maths and calculations	1	2	3	4	5

Please comment on your answer if you wish

---

**End of survey**

**Please note the time the survey took to complete** ..... **minutes**



***Thank you for completing this survey! Don't forget to fill in the small yellow form if you would like to be in the prize draw. Please return your survey by Friday 23 July to be eligible for the draw.***

**If you have mislaid the reply paid envelope, the return address is:**

**NCVER Apprentice Project, School of Education, University of Ballarat, PO Box 663, Ballarat, Vic 3353**

# Appendix 3: Additional findings from surveys

Additional findings from the quantitative surveys are presented in this appendix. These results supplement the main survey findings presented and discussed in the main report.

## Importance of obligations

### 1. Direct and GTO employed apprentices and trainees: Importance of obligations

The three most and least important employer obligations rated by direct and GTO employed apprentices and trainees are shown in Table 1. Overall, the employer obligations considered most and least important were similar for all four employee groups surveyed. Direct employed apprentices and trainees rated the same three employer obligations as being the most important (adequate training; treated the same and provide resources) and least important (job that I like, support for personal problems; and help gain promotion), but differed in their ratings regarding order of importance. Similarly, GTO employed apprentices and trainees rated the same three employer obligations as being the least important (job that I like; support for personal problems; and help develop career), but differed in their order of importance. For obligations rated as most important, GTO employed apprentices and trainees similarly rated two of the three obligations (adequate training and treated the same).

Table 2 shows the three most and least important employee obligations rated by apprentices and trainees. The employee obligations considered most and least important were similar for all four employee groups surveyed. Direct employed apprentices and trainees rated the same three obligations as being least important (be willing to accept a transfer; spend two years with employer; and work more hours), but differed in their ratings regarding order of importance. Similarly, GTO employed apprentices and trainees rated the same three obligations as being most important (attend work every day; always be punctual; and put in a full day's work), but differed in their ratings regarding order of importance. For obligations rated as most important, direct employed apprentices and trainees similarly rated two of the three obligations (always be punctual and attend work every day). This was also the case for obligations rated as least important by GTO employed apprentices and trainees (spend two years with employer and be willing to accept a transfer).

Table 3 presents the three most and least important training obligations rated by apprentices and trainees. Two of the three most important (opportunity to keep learning and apply what is learned) and least important (assessment not too hard and assessment not too easy) training obligations were consistently rated across all four employee groups and except for direct employed trainees, the order of importance was also rated the same by all the groups. There were some differences among direct employed apprentices and trainees and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding ratings of the third most important training obligation. Similarly, GTO employed apprentices and trainees also differed in relation to ratings of the third least important training obligation.

**Table 1: Means and standard deviations examining differences between direct employed and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important employer obligations**

Direct Employed	GTO Employed <sup>1</sup>								
	Apprentices		Trainees		Apprentices		Trainees		
Most Important Obligations	M	SD	M	SD	Most Important Obligations	M	SD	M	SD
1. Adequate training	9.32	1.30	9.16	1.69	1. Adequate training	9.13	1.23	8.95	1.39
2. Treated the same	9.16	1.48	9.42	1.41	2. Treated the same	8.96	1.33	9.19	1.17
3. Provide resources	9.03	1.50	8.91	1.80	3. Help develop career	8.84	1.52	-	-
					4. Talk about matters	-	-	8.67	1.53
Least Important Obligations					Least Important Obligations				
1. Job that I like	5.63	2.95	6.69	2.69	1. Job that I like	5.92	2.83	5.75	2.73
2. Support for personal problems	6.69	2.45	6.81	2.59	2. Support for personal problems	6.84	2.59	7.06	2.22
3. Help gain promotion	7.12	2.84	7.31	2.48	3. Help develop career	8.84	1.52	8.50	1.76

Notes: <sup>1</sup> GTO employees rated the importance of host employer obligations; Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)

**Table 2: Means and standard deviations examining differences between direct employed and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important employee obligations**

Direct Employed	GTO Employed <sup>1</sup>								
	Apprentices		Trainees		Apprentices		Trainees		
Most Important Obligations	M	SD	M	SD	Most Important Obligations	M	SD	M	SD
1. Always be punctual	9.54	0.90	9.56	0.80	1. Attend work every day	9.28	1.23	9.51	0.87
2. Attend work every day	9.44	1.02	9.45	1.05	2. Always be punctual	9.22	1.27	9.46	0.87
3. Become more skilled	9.40	0.99	-	-	3. Put in a full day's work	9.16	1.20	9.59	0.72
4. Put in a full day's work	-	-	9.56	0.79					
Least Important Obligations					Least Important Obligations				
1. Willing to accept a transfer	5.96	3.22	5.42	2.97	1. Spend two years with employer	5.91	3.13	6.39	2.79
2. Spend two years with employer	6.59	3.15	5.20	3.70	2. Refuse to support competitors	6.68	2.69	-	-
3. Work more hours	6.82	2.86	5.47	3.46	3. Willing to accept a transfer	6.75	2.60	6.59	3.14
					4. Work more hours	-	-	5.76	3.51

Notes: <sup>1</sup> GTO employees rated the importance of obligations in relation to the host employer; Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)

**Table 3: Means and standard deviations examining differences between direct employed and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important training obligations**

Direct Employed					GTO Employed				
	Apprentices		Trainees			Apprentices		Trainees	
	M	SD	M	SD		M	SD	M	SD
Most Important Obligations					Most Important Obligations				
1. Opportunity to keep learning	9.42	0.99	9.17	1.45	1. Opportunity to keep learning	8.87	1.53	9.32	1.14
2. Apply what is learned	9.31	1.22	8.99	1.63	2. Apply what is learned	8.75	1.54	9.18	1.23
3. Different processes/experiences	9.27	1.25	-	-	3. Range of training methods	8.67	1.50	-	-
4. Range of training methods	-	-	8.78	1.62	4. Different processes/experiences	-	-	9.05	1.33
Least Important Obligations					Least Important Obligations				
1. Assessment not too hard	7.96	2.39	8.18	2.11	1. Assessment not too hard	7.69	1.93	8.42	1.82
2. Assessment not too easy	8.42	2.07	8.12	2.19	2. Assessment not too easy	7.92	1.90	8.53	1.52
3. An identified contact	8.45	1.85	8.32	2.25	3. Assessment involving feedback	7.97	2.05	-	-
					4. Regular assessment	-	-	8.63	1.67

Notes: Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)

## 2. Combined apprentices and trainees: Importance of obligations compared

Data were combined for direct and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding ratings of importance of obligations in order to examine overall differences between apprentices and trainees. Table 4 shows the three most and least important employer obligations rated by apprentices and trainees. Overall, apprentices and trainees rated similar employer obligations as being the most and least important. Both groups similarly rated adequate training and treated the same as two of the most important employer obligations, but differed in their order of importance. For employer obligations considered the least important, apprentices and trainees rated the same three obligations (job that I like; support for personal problems; and help gain promotion).

**Table 4: Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important employer obligations**

	Apprentices		Trainees	
	M	SD	M	SD
Most Important Obligations				
1. Adequate training	9.23	1.27	9.09	1.59
2. Treated the same	9.06	1.41	9.35	1.34
3. Help develop career	8.92	1.50	-	-
4. Talk about matters	-	-	8.69	1.87
Least Important Obligations				
1. Job that I like	5.77	2.89	6.39	2.72
2. Support for personal problems	6.76	2.52	6.88	2.47
3. Help gain promotion	7.01	2.69	7.01	2.48

Table 5 shows the three most and least important employee obligations rated by apprentices and trainees. Apprentices and trainees similarly rated always be punctual and attend work every day as important employee obligations and spend two years with employer and be willing to accept a transfer as employee obligations of least importance, but the order of importance differed in the ratings.

**Table 5: Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important employee obligations**

	Apprentices		Trainees	
	M	SD	M	SD
Most Important Obligations				
1. Always be punctual	9.38	1.11	9.53	0.82
2. Attend work every day	9.36	1.13	9.47	0.99
3. Become more skilled	9.26	1.14	-	-
4. Put in a full day's work	-	-	9.57	0.76
Least Important Obligations				
1. Spend two years with employer	6.24	3.15	5.58	3.47
2. Willing to accept a transfer	6.36	2.94	5.81	3.06
3. Refuse to support competitors	6.95	2.79	-	-
4. Work more hours			5.57	3.46

Table 6 shows the three most and least important training obligations rated by apprentices and trainees. Both apprentices and trainees similarly rated opportunity to keep learning and apply what is learned as the two most important training obligations. Both groups also similarly rated assessment not too hard and assessment not too easy as two of the least important training obligations, but differed in their order of importance.

**Table 6: Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important training obligations**

	Apprentices		Trainees	
	M	SD	M	SD
Most Important Obligations				
1. Opportunity to keep learning	9.14	1.31	9.22	1.36
2. Apply what is learned	9.03	1.41	9.05	1.51
3. Range of training methods	8.96	1.36	-	-
4. Specific time for training	-	-	8.97	1.56
Least Important Obligations				
1. Assessment not too hard	7.83	2.18	8.26	2.02
2. Assessment not too easy	8.17	2.00	8.25	1.99
3. An identified contact	8.23	1.97	-	-
4. Regular assessment	-	-	8.46	1.90

### 3. Direct and GTO employers: Importance of obligations compared

Table 7 shows the three most and least important employer obligations rated by direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees. The employer obligations considered most important were the same for all four employer groups surveyed (adequate training; treat the same; and provide resources) and except for GTO employers of trainees, the order of importance was also the same. For obligations rated as least important, direct employers of apprentices and trainees similarly rated two of the three obligations (job that I like and time off for personal needs). GTO employers of apprentices and trainees rated the same three obligations as being least important (job that I like; time off for personal needs; and support for personal problems) and also rated the obligations in the same order.

The three most and least important employee obligations rated by direct and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees are shown in Table 8. The employee obligations considered most and least important were similar for all four employer groups surveyed. Direct and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees similarly rated two out of three employee obligations as being most important (always be punctual and attend work every day). Direct employers of apprentices and trainees rated the same three obligations as being least important (be willing to accept a transfer; work more hours; and spend two years with employer), but differed in their order of importance. GTO employers of apprentices and trainees similarly rated two of the three employee obligations as being least important (work more hours and refuse to support competitors).

Table 9 shows the three most and least important training obligations rated by direct and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees. There was some inconsistency in the ratings of training obligations considered most and least important across the four employer groups. Direct employers of apprentices and trainees agreed on the three most important training obligations (opportunity to keep learning; different processes/experiences; and apply what is learned), but

differed in ratings regarding the order of importance. For least important training obligations, direct employers of apprentices and trainees similarly rated only one obligation assessment not too hard. GTO employers of apprentices and trainees were in agreement about the three least important training obligations and also ranked them in the same order (assessment not too hard; assessment not too easy; and range of training methods). For most important training obligations, GTO employers of apprentices and trainees similarly rated only specific time for training as an important training obligation.

**Table 7: Means and standard deviations examining differences between direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important employer obligations**

Direct Employers	ERs of Apprentices		ERs of Trainees		GTO Employers <sup>1</sup>	ERs of Apprentices		ERs of Trainees	
	M	SD	M	SD		M	SD	M	SD
Most Important Obligations					Most Important Obligations				
1. Adequate training	9.44	0.91	9.19	1.15	1. Provide resources	9.06	1.14	9.15	1.07
2. Treat the same	9.34	1.00	9.15	1.14	2. Treat the same	9.06	1.34	9.23	1.01
3. Provide resources	9.15	1.14	8.95	1.22	3. Adequate training	9.00	2.00	9.08	0.95
Least Important Obligations					Least Important Obligations				
1. Job that I like	6.37	2.31	6.74	2.35	1. Job that I like	6.65	1.54	7.54	1.51
2. Support for personal problems	7.55	2.02	-	-	2. Time off for personal needs	7.06	1.78	7.77	1.79
3. Time off for personal needs	7.77	2.01	7.77	2.07	3. Support for personal problems	7.53	1.94	8.15	1.77
4. Help gain promotion	-	-	7.75	2.15					

Notes. <sup>1</sup> GTO employers rated the importance of host employer obligations; Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)

**Table 8: Means and standard deviations examining differences between direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important employee obligations**

Direct Employers	ERs of Apprentices		ERs of Trainees		GTO Employers <sup>1</sup>	ERs of Apprentices		ERs of Trainees	
	M	SD	M	SD		M	SD	M	SD
Most Important Obligations					Most Important Obligations				
1. Always be punctual	9.48	0.90	9.35	0.90	1. Always be punctual	9.41	0.87	9.46	0.97
2. Attend work every day	9.45	0.95	9.25	1.13	2. Attend work every day	9.41	0.87	9.46	0.97
3. Put in a full day's work	9.33	1.17	-	-	3. Put in a full day's work	9.35	0.86	9.46	0.97
4. Work well with others	-	-	9.27	0.97					
Least Important Obligations					Least Important Obligations				
1. Willing to accept a transfer	5.26	3.07	5.20	3.06	1. Work more hours	5.65	2.57	6.31	2.69
2. Work more hours	5.48	2.96	4.66	2.84	2. Spend two years with employer	6.06	1.95	-	-
3. Spend two years with employer	6.81	2.65	5.77	2.88	3. Refuse to support competitors	6.47	2.00	7.15	1.99
					4. Willing to accept a transfer	-	-	7.15	1.82

Notes: <sup>1</sup> GTO employers rated the importance of employee obligations in relation to the host employer; Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)



**Table 9: Means and standard deviations examining differences between direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important training obligations**

Direct Employers	ERs of Apprentices		ERs of Trainees		GTO Employers	ERs of Apprentices		ERs of Trainees	
	M	SD	M	SD		M	SD	M	SD
Most Important Obligations					Most Important Obligations				
1. Opportunity to keep learning	9.14	1.02	8.99	1.13	1. Opportunity to keep learning	9.06	1.09	-	-
2. Different processes/experiences	9.08	1.11	8.98	1.10	2. Specific time for training	9.06	1.09	9.15	1.21
3. Apply what is learned	9.03	1.17	9.13	0.97	3. Apply what is learned	9.12	0.99	-	-
					4. Regular assessment	-	-	9.08	1.26
					5. Make mistakes and learn	-	-	9.08	1.26
Least Important Obligations					Least Important Obligations				
1. Assessment not too hard	7.82	2.06	8.04	1.96	1. Assessment not too hard	7.88	1.32	8.00	1.63
2. Assessment involving feedback	8.38	1.53	-	-	2. Assessment not too easy	8.29	1.31	8.08	1.66
3. Specific time for training	8.51	1.54	-	-	3. Range of training methods	8.76	1.25	8.77	1.54
4. Assessment not too easy	-	-	8.53	1.46					
5. Range of training methods	-	-	8.55	1.54					

Notes: Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)

#### 4. GTO Employers: Ratings of importance of GTO and host obligations

GTO employers of apprentices and trainees rated the importance of employer and employee obligations to both the GTO and the host employer. Table 10 shows the three most and least important GTO and host employer obligations, as rated by GTO employers. GTO employers of apprentices rated the same three employer obligations as being least important for the GTO and host employer (time off for personal needs; job that I like; and support for personal problems), but differed in their ratings regarding most important employer obligations. GTO employers of trainees similarly rated two of the three most important (act in a supportive way and treated the same) and least important employer obligations (time off for personal needs and job that I like) for the GTO and host employer.

Table 11 shows the three most and least important employee obligations to the GTO and host employer, as rated by GTO employers. GTO employers of apprentices and trainees similarly rated two out of three employee obligations as being most important to the GTO and host employer (always be punctual and attend work every day). For least important employee obligations, GTO employers of apprentices and trainees rated the same three obligations as being least important to the GTO and host employer (work more hours; refuse to support competitors; and be willing to accept a transfer).

**Table 10: Means and standard deviations examining differences among GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important GTO and host employer obligations**

	GTO Employers of Apprentices				GTO Employers of Trainees				
	GTO Obligation		Host Obligation		GTO Obligation		Host Obligation		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Most Important Obligations					Most Important Obligations				
1. Talk about matters	9.59	1.00	-	-	1. Act in a supportive way	9.62	0.65	9.23	0.93
2. Act in a supportive way	9.59	0.87	-	-	2. Talk about matters	9.46	1.05	-	-
3. Help develop career	9.47	0.87	-	-	3. Treat the same	9.46	0.88	9.23	1.01
4. Provide resources	-	-	9.06	1.14	4. Provide resources	-	-	9.15	1.07
5. Treat the same	-	-	9.06	1.34					
6. Adequate training	-	-	9.00	2.00					
Least Important Obligations					Least Important Obligations				
1. Time off for personal needs	7.35	2.09	7.06	1.78	1. Time off for personal needs	7.08	2.05	7.77	1.79
2. Job that I like	8.00	1.70	6.65	1.54	2. Job that I like	8.00	1.83	7.54	1.51
3. Support for personal problems	9.06	1.60	7.53	1.94	3. Provide resources	8.69	1.38	-	-
					4. Support for personal problems	-	-	8.15	1.77

**Table 11: Means and standard deviations examining differences among GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding the three most and least important employee obligations to the GTO and Host employer**

	GTO Employers of Apprentices				GTO Employers of Trainees				
	Obligation to GTO		Obligation to Host		Obligation to GTO		Obligation to Host		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Most Important Obligations					Most Important Obligations				
1. Always be punctual	9.47	0.87	9.41	0.87	1. Always be punctual	9.54	0.78	9.46	0.97
2. Attend work every day	9.35	1.00	9.41	0.87	2. Attend work every day	9.54	0.97	9.23	1.54
3. Put in a full day's work	9.24	1.03	9.35	0.86	3. Stay with present employer	9.31	1.18	-	-
					4. Put in a full day's work	-	-	9.46	0.97
Least Important Obligations					Least Important Obligations				
1. Work more hours	4.00	3.08	5.65	2.57	1. Work more hours	5.62	3.88	6.31	2.69
2. Refuse to support competitors	6.53	2.40	6.47	2.00	2. Refuse to support competitors	7.00	1.83	7.15	1.99
3. Willing to accept a transfer	7.29	1.99	7.35	1.62	3. Willing to accept a transfer	7.85	1.68	7.15	1.82

## Met obligations

### 1. Direct and GTO employed apprentices and trainees: Met obligations compared

A comparison of the ratings between apprentices and trainees regarding the extent to which employer obligations were met are shown in Table 12. Three of the four employee groups rated provide resources and adequate training as employer obligations that were most often met. Direct employed trainees and GTO employed apprentices also rated treated the same and act in supportive way as obligations being met most often. All four employee groups similarly rated support for personal problems; job that I like; and help gain promotion as the three employer obligations that were least often met.

The extent to which four employer obligations (help develop career; provide resources; help gain promotion; and time off for personal needs) were met differed significantly between direct employed apprentices and trainees. In all four instances, the extent to which these obligations were met was significantly higher for direct employed apprentices, compared with direct employed trainees. Among GTO employed apprentices and trainees, there were no significant differences in the extent to which employer obligations were met.

A comparison of the ratings between apprentices and trainees regarding the extent to which employee obligations were met are shown in Table 13. The employee obligations put in a full day's work and attend work every day were rated as being met most often by all four employee groups surveyed. In addition, both direct and GTO employed apprentices also rated always be punctual as being met most often. For trainees, direct employed additionally rated work well with others and GTO employed rated protect reputation of company as being met most often.

All four groups rated refuse to support competitors and be willing to accept a transfer as employee obligations least often met. Other employee obligations rated as being met least often were work more hours (direct and GTO employed trainees); refuse to give outsiders information (direct employed apprentices); and stay with present employer (GTO employed apprentices).

The extent to which five employee obligations (stay with present employer; protect reputation of company; put interests of employer first; do non-required tasks; and put in a full day's work) were met differed significantly between GTO employed apprentices and trainees. In all five instances, the extent to which these obligations were met was significantly higher for GTO employed trainees, compared with GTO employed apprentices. Among direct employed apprentices and trainees, there was a significant difference in relation to the employee obligation work more hours. The extent to which this obligation was met was significantly higher for direct employed apprentices, compared with direct employed trainees.

.

**Table 12: Means, standard deviations and independent t-test statistic examining differences between direct employed and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding extent to which employer obligations were met**

Item	Direct Employed								GTO Employed <sup>2</sup>							
	Apprentices			Trainees			Group Differences Statistics		Apprentices			Trainees			Group Differences Statistics	
	n <sup>1</sup>	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-test	p	n1	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-test	p
1. Talk about matters	135	7.43	2.73	76	7.05	2.96	0.93	.351	134	7.80	2.27	37	8.54	1.97	-1.81	.072
2. Help develop career	135	7.61	2.61	75	6.80	2.85	2.08	.039*	135	8.01	1.99	36	8.28	2.12	-0.69	.489
3. Long-serving employees	121	7.19	2.77	70	7.01	2.62	0.43	.667	117	7.76	1.86	34	8.18	1.80	-1.15	.251
4. Support for personal problems	122	6.85	3.05	71	6.48	2.92	0.83	.406	122	7.23	2.51	33	7.55	2.81	-0.63	.533
5. Provide resources	134	7.97	2.41	76	7.01	3.03	2.36	.020*	134	8.51	1.65	37	8.62	1.80	-0.34	.733
6. Job that I like	127	6.34	2.86	69	6.07	2.82	0.62	.533	131	6.85	2.29	35	7.46	2.68	-1.35	.180
7. Performance appraisal fair	128	7.42	2.64	70	7.16	2.71	0.67	.504	128	7.98	1.76	34	8.38	2.15	-1.12	.266
8. Treated the same	134	7.62	2.96	75	7.73	2.66	-0.28	.782	135	8.32	2.01	37	8.43	2.61	-0.28	.776
9. Help gain promotion	113	6.50	3.07	67	5.39	3.39	2.27	.024*	110	6.97	2.62	30	7.13	2.61	-0.30	.766
10. Adequate training	136	7.67	2.69	76	7.17	2.70	1.30	.195	134	8.27	1.82	37	8.81	1.52	-1.66	.099
11. Time off for personal needs	132	8.03	2.55	69	6.88	2.84	2.91	.004*	129	8.17	2.15	35	8.09	2.27	0.20	.838
12. Act in supportive way	135	7.53	2.80	76	7.34	2.68	0.46	.642	135	8.30	1.81	37	8.43	2.19	-0.39	.700

Notes: <sup>1</sup>Excludes participants who responded Not Applicable; <sup>2</sup> GTO employees rated the degree to which host employer obligations were met; \* p < .05; Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)

**Table 13: Means, standard deviations and independent groups t-test statistics examining differences between direct employed and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding extent to which employee obligations were met**

Item	Direct Employed								GTO Employed <sup>3</sup>							
	Apprentices			Trainees			Group Differences Statistics		Apprentices			Trainees			Group Differences Statistics	
	n <sup>1</sup>	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-	p	n1	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-	p
							test								test	
1. Stay with present employer	124	9.35	1.57	69	9.04	2.09	1.08	.283	112	7.40	3.25	32	9.06	2.50	-3.09	.003*
2. Protect reputation of company	137	9.31	1.29	75	9.03	1.45	1.45	.150	133	8.63	1.77	37	9.51	0.96	-4.01	.000*
3. Put interests of employer first	136	8.91	1.53	76	8.80	1.57	0.49	.622	132	8.59	1.62	38	9.24	1.26	-2.60	.011*
4. Be open with supervisor/employer	137	8.72	1.68	76	8.97	1.51	-1.08	.281	135	8.35	1.94	37	8.89	1.61	-1.56	.120
5. Be loyal to company	137	9.04	1.70	74	9.14	1.56	-0.41	.680	133	8.86	1.43	38	9.24	1.26	-1.45	.150
6. Do non-required tasks	137	9.04	1.49	74	9.15	1.40	-0.53	.594	134	8.51	1.68	38	9.32	0.99	-3.71	.000*
7. Refuse to support competitors	122	8.16	2.69	67	7.66	3.13	1.17	.243	118	7.51	2.46	32	8.00	2.50	-1.00	.319
8. Spend two years with employer <sup>2</sup>																
9. Work more hours	134	8.66	2.11	72	7.67	2.98	2.50	.014*	133	8.29	1.86	38	8.05	2.17	0.68	.499
10. Willing to accept a transfer	137	2.00	0.73	76	1.99	.76	0.12	.901	111	7.43	2.69	26	6.96	3.50	0.64	.525
11. Refuse to give information	123	8.31	2.47	68	8.38	2.56	-0.19	.846	128	8.30	1.96	34	8.29	2.74	0.01	.995
12. Become more skilled	137	9.25	1.33	75	9.40	.85	-1.01	.314	134	8.75	1.39	38	9.21	1.28	-1.82	.071
13. Work well with others	137	9.45	0.98	76	9.51	.89	-0.44	.656	135	8.87	1.36	38	9.34	1.19	-1.95	.053
14. Put in a full day's work	137	9.51	0.87	76	9.50	1.33	0.07	.942	135	9.04	1.27	38	9.61	0.75	-3.47	.001*
15. Attend work every day	137	9.55	0.96	76	9.62	.86	-0.53	.594	136	9.24	1.18	38	9.53	0.89	-1.41	.161
16. Always be punctual	137	9.58	0.84	76	9.45	1.12	1.01	.316	136	9.08	1.24	38	9.47	0.92	-1.81	.071

Notes: <sup>1</sup>Excludes participants who responded Not Applicable; <sup>2</sup> This question was excluded in the employee met obligations section as it is not relevant at this stage of the job, therefore a t-test was not calculated; <sup>3</sup> GTO employees rated the extent to which they met obligations to the host employer; \* p < .05; Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met).

**Table 14: Means, standard deviations and independent samples t-test statistics examining differences between direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding extent to which training obligations were met**

Item	Direct Employers									GTO Employers						
	ERs of Apprentices			ERs of Trainees			Group Differences Statistics			ERs of Apprentices		ERs of Trainees			Group Differences Statistics	
	n <sup>1</sup>	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-test	p	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-test	p	
1. An identified contact	162	8.56	1.68	93	8.52	2.22	0.16	.873	17	8.35	1.80	12	9.33	0.89	-1.74	.094
2. Different processes/experiences	163	8.85	1.14	93	8.66	1.48	1.07	.286	17	8.41	1.00	12	8.33	1.23	0.19	.852
3. Range of training methods	162	8.64	1.42	92	8.29	1.65	1.70	.091	17	8.47	0.87	12	8.67	0.98	-0.56	.577
4. Assessment not too easy	158	8.27	1.47	93	7.99	1.86	1.33	.184	17	8.29	1.31	12	8.25	1.36	0.08	.931
5. Assessment not too hard	157	8.08	1.68	92	8.02	1.95	0.23	.816	17	8.29	1.26	12	8.25	1.29	0.09	.927
6. Regular assessment	161	8.04	1.81	93	8.04	2.07	0.00	.999	17	8.47	1.01	12	9.00	0.95	-1.42	.166
7. Assessment involving feedback	159	8.11	1.75	92	8.24	1.84	-0.54	.590	17	8.65	1.00	12	9.00	1.13	-0.89	.381
8. Opportunity to keep learning	163	8.83	1.15	93	8.49	1.68	1.70	.092	17	8.41	0.87	12	8.83	0.72	-1.38	.180
9. Specific time for training	161	8.53	1.47	93	8.08	1.91	2.00	.047*	17	8.76	0.97	12	8.92	1.24	-0.37	.714
10. Apply what is learned	163	8.88	1.16	93	8.73	1.36	0.91	.365	17	8.82	0.95	12	9.08	0.79	-0.77	.446
11. Make mistakes and learn	163	8.58	1.45	93	8.49	1.58	0.42	.674	17	8.53	1.18	12	9.08	1.00	-1.33	.196

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Excludes participants who responded Not Applicable; \* p < .05; Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)

A comparison of the ratings between apprentices and trainees regarding the extent to which training obligations were met are shown in Table 14. The training obligation to provide an identified contact was rated by all four employee groups as one of the obligations being met most often. Direct and GTO employed trainees also rated assessment involving feedback as a training obligation that was most often met. Three of the four employee groups rated specific time for training and assessment not too hard as training obligations least often met. Other training obligations that were least often met included range of training methods (direct and GTO employed trainees); assessment not too easy (GTO employed apprentice and trainees); regular assessment (GTO employed apprentices); assessment involving feedback (direct employed apprentices); and apply what is learnt (direct employed trainees).

The extent to which three training obligations (range of training methods; specific time for training; and make mistakes and learn) were met differed significantly between direct employed apprentices and trainees. In all three instances, the extent to which these obligations were met was significantly higher for direct employed apprentices, compared with direct employed trainees. Among GTO employed apprentices and trainees, there was a significant difference between the two groups relating to five training obligations (an identified contact; different processes/experiences; assessment not too hard; regular assessment; and assessment involving feedback). In all five instances, the extent to which these obligations were met was significantly higher for GTO employed trainees, compared with GTO employed apprentices.

## 2. Combined apprentices and trainees: Met obligations compared

Data were combined for direct and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding the extent to which obligations were met in order to examine overall differences between apprentices and trainees. A comparison of the ratings between apprentices and trainees regarding the extent to which employer obligations were met are shown in Table 15. Both apprentices and trainees rated adequate training as an employer obligation met most often. Job that I like, help gain promotion and support for personal problems were rated by both groups as employer obligations met least often.

The extent to which three employer obligations (provide resources; help gain promotion; and time off for personal needs) were met differed significantly between apprentices and trainees. In each instance, the extent to which these obligations were met was significantly higher for apprentices compared with trainees.

**Table 15: Means, standard deviations and independent groups t-test statistics examining differences between apprentices and trainees regarding extent to which employer obligations were met**

Item	Apprentices			Trainees			Group Differences Statistics	
	n <sup>1</sup>	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-test	p
1. Talk about matters	269	7.61	2.51	113	7.54	2.76	0.25	.800
2. Help develop career	270	7.81	2.33	111	7.28	2.71	1.81	.072
3. Long-serving employees	238	7.47	2.38	104	7.39	2.44	0.27	.787
4. Support for personal problems	244	7.04	2.80	104	6.82	2.91	0.67	.500
5. Provide resources	268	8.24	2.08	113	7.54	2.79	2.41	.017*
6. Job that I like	258	6.60	2.60	104	6.54	2.84	0.19	.851



7. Performance appraisal fair	256	7.70	2.26	104	7.56	2.59	0.53	.596
8. Treated the same	269	7.97	2.55	112	7.96	2.65	0.02	.984
9. Help gain promotion	223	6.74	2.86	97	5.93	3.26	2.11	.036*
10. Adequate training	270	7.97	2.32	113	7.71	2.49	0.98	.328
11. Time off for personal needs	261	8.10	2.36	104	7.29	2.71	2.68	.008*
12. Act in a supportive way	270	7.91	2.39	113	7.70	2.57	0.77	.439

Notes: <sup>1</sup>Excludes participants who responded Not Applicable; \* p < .05; Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)

A comparison of the ratings between apprentices and trainees regarding the extent to which employee obligations were met are shown in Table 16. Apprentices and trainees similarly rated attend work every day, always be punctual and put in a full day's work as employee obligations met most often. Both groups rated refuse to support competitors and be willing to accept a transfer as employee obligations met least often.

The extent to which eight employee obligations were met differed significantly between apprentices and trainees. The extent to which six obligations (stay with present employer; be open with supervisor/employer; do non-required tasks; become more skilled; work well with others; and put in a full day's work) were met was significantly higher among trainees compared with apprentices. For two obligations (work more hours and be willing to accept a transfer), the extent to which these were met was significantly higher among apprentices compared with trainees.

A comparison of the ratings between apprentices and trainees regarding the extent to which training obligations were met are shown in Table 17. Both apprentices and trainees rated an identified contact as a training obligation that was met most often. In addition, apprentices rated regular assessment; assessment not too hard and assessment not too easy, while trainees rated specific time for training; range of training methods and make mistakes and learn as training obligations least often met.

The extent to which three training obligations were met differed significantly between apprentices and trainees. In two cases (range of training methods and specific time for training), the extent to which the obligations were met was significantly higher among apprentices compared with trainees. The obligation an identified contact was met significantly more often for trainees compared with apprentices.

**Table 16: Means, standard deviations and independent groups t-test statistics examining differences between apprentices and trainees regarding extent employee obligations were met**

Item	Apprentices			Trainees			Group Differences Statistics	
	n <sup>1</sup>	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-test	p
1. Stay with present employer	236	8.43	2.69	101	9.05	2.21	-2.21	.028*
2. Protect reputation of company	270	8.97	1.58	112	9.19	1.33	-1.26	.209
3. Put interests of employer first	268	8.75	1.58	114	8.95	1.48	-1.12	.264
4. Be open with supervisor/employer	272	8.54	1.82	113	8.95	1.54	-2.10	.036*
5. Be loyal to company	270	8.95	1.57	112	9.17	1.46	-1.26	.210
6. Do non-required tasks	271	8.78	1.60	112	9.21	1.27	-2.76	.006*
7. Refuse to support competitors	240	7.84	2.59	99	7.77	2.93	0.23	.818
8. Spend two years with employer <sup>2</sup>								
9. Work more hours	267	8.48	1.99	110	7.80	2.72	2.36	.020*
10. Willing to accept a transfer	248	4.43	3.29	102	3.25	2.87	3.34	.001*
11. Refuse to give information	251	8.30	2.22	102	8.35	2.60	-0.18	.855
12. Become more skilled	271	9.00	1.38	113	9.34	1.01	-2.62	.009*
13. Work well with others	272	9.16	1.22	114	9.46	1.00	-2.27	.024*
14. Put in a full day's work	272	9.28	1.11	114	9.54	1.17	-2.06	.040*
15. Attend work every day	273	9.39	1.09	114	9.59	0.87	-1.87	.063
16. Always be punctual	273	9.33	1.07	114	9.46	1.06	-1.02	.307

Notes: 1Excludes participants who responded Not Applicable; 2 This question was excluded in the employee met obligations section as it is not relevant at this stage of the job, therefore a t-test was not calculated; \*  $p < .05$ ; Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)

**Table 17: Means, standard deviations and independent groups t-test statistics examining differences between apprentices and trainees regarding extent training obligations were met**

Item	Apprentices			Trainees			Group Differences Statistics	
	n <sup>1</sup>	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-test	p
1. An identified contact	262	8.22	2.22	110	8.74	1.73	-2.17	.030*
2. Different processes/ experiences	267	8.05	2.19	109	7.96	2.46	0.33	.741
3. Range of training methods	265	8.03	2.18	109	7.31	2.87	2.34	.021*
4. Assessment not too easy	261	7.87	2.22	111	8.01	2.34	-0.53	.597
5. Assessment not too hard	262	7.75	2.26	111	8.07	2.20	-1.27	.203
6. Regular assessment	259	7.83	2.19	110	8.19	2.21	-1.44	.149
7. Assessment involving feedback	261	7.88	2.24	112	8.28	2.28	-1.57	.117
8. Opportunity to keep learning	265	8.31	2.04	113	8.08	2.66	0.82	.412
9. Specific time for training	264	7.93	2.42	114	6.77	3.25	3.41	.001*
10. Apply what is learned	267	8.18	2.07	113	7.91	2.56	0.97	.333
11. Make mistakes and learn	267	8.21	2.07	114	7.89	2.63	1.17	.245

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Excludes participants who responded Not Applicable; \* p < .05; Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)

### 3. Direct and GTO Employers Met Obligations Compared

A comparison of the ratings between employers of apprentices and employers of trainees regarding the extent to which employer obligations were met are shown in Table 18. All four employer groups rated treated the same as one of the employer obligations most often met. Three of the four employer groups also rated adequate training and act in a supportive way as being met most often. For employer obligations met least often, all four employer groups similarly rated support for personal problems and job that I like as obligations that were least often met.

The extent to which the employer obligation help develop career was met differed significantly between direct employers of apprentices and trainees. Direct employers of apprentices rated this obligation as being met significantly higher compared with direct employers of trainees. Among GTO employers of apprentices and trainees, there were no significant differences in the extent to which employer obligations were met.

A comparison of the ratings between employers of apprentices and employers of trainees regarding the extent to which employee obligations were met are shown in Table 19. All four employer groups rated work well with others as an employee obligation that was met most often. Three of the four employer groups also rated protect reputation of company as an employee obligation most often met. For employee obligations met least often, all four employer groups similarly rated spend two years with employer and work more hours.

Among direct employers of apprentices and trainees there were no significant differences in the extent to which employee obligations were met. Similarly, there were no significant differences in the extent to which employee obligations were met among GTO employers of apprentices and trainees.

A comparison of the ratings between employers of apprentices and employers of trainees regarding the extent to which training obligations were met are presented in Table 20. All four employer groups rated apply what is learned as a training obligation most often met. Direct employers of apprentices and direct employers of trainees also rated different processes/experiences as being met most often. The training obligation assessment not too hard was rated by all four employer groups and assessment not too easy was rated by three employer groups as obligations least often met.

The extent to which one training obligation (specific time for training) was met differed significantly between direct employers of apprentices and direct employers of trainees, with direct employers of apprentices rating this obligation as being met significantly higher compared with direct employers of trainees. Among GTO employers of apprentices and trainees, there were no significant differences in the extent to which training obligations were met.

#### 4. GTO Employer Ratings of Met GTO and Host Obligations

GTO employers of apprentices and trainees rated the extent to which employer and employee obligations were met both to the GTO and the host employer. As shown in Table 21, GTO employers of apprentices and trainees rated the obligations treated the same and act in a supportive way as employer obligations met most often by both the GTO and the host employer. Both groups similarly rated the employer obligations job that I like and time off for personal needs as being met least often by the GTO and host employer.

Among GTO employers of apprentices, ratings regarding the extent to which three employer obligations (talk about matters; support for personal problems; and act in a supportive way) were met by the GTO and host employer differed significantly. In each instance, the GTO was perceived to have met the obligation to a significantly greater extent than the host employer. Among GTO employers of trainees, ratings regarding the extent to which five employer obligations (talk about matters; help develop career; support for personal problems; performance appraisal fair; and act in a supportive way) were met by the GTO and host employer differed significantly. In all instances, the GTO was perceived to have met these obligations to a significantly greater extent, compared with the host employer.

As shown in Table 22, GTO employers of apprentices and trainees rated work well with others as an employee obligation met most often to both the GTO and the host employer. Additionally, GTO employers of apprentices rated put in a full day's work and GTO employers of trainees rated become more skilled as employee obligations met most often to both the GTO and the host employer. GTO employers of apprentices and trainees similarly rated the obligations refuse to support competitors and work more hours as employee obligations least often met to both the GTO and the host employer.

Among GTO employers of apprentices, ratings regarding the extent to which four employee obligations (protect reputation of company; be loyal to company; attend work every day; and always be punctual) were met to the GTO and the host employer, differed significantly. In all four instances the obligations were perceived to have been met to the host employer to a significantly greater extent, compared with the GTO. Among GTO employers of trainees, there were no significant differences in the extent to which employee obligations were perceived to have been met to the GTO and to the host employer.



**Table 18: Means, standard deviations and independent samples t-test statistics examining differences between direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding extent to which employer obligations were met**

Item	Direct Employers								GTO Employers <sup>3</sup>							
	ERs of Apprentices			ERs of Trainees			Group Differences Statistics		ERs of Apprentices			ERs of Trainees			Group Differences Statistics	
	n <sup>1</sup>	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-test	p	n1	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-test	p
1. Talk about matters	166	8.61	1.32	92	8.67	1.52	-0.36	.719	17	7.82	1.38	13	8.08	1.50	-0.48	.635
2. Help develop career	166	8.83	1.27	91	8.16	1.75	3.20	.002*	17	7.82	1.24	13	7.92	1.32	-0.21	.833
3. Long-serving employees <sup>2</sup>	159	8.76	1.32	82	8.45	1.74	1.41	.160								
4. Support for personal problems	163	7.91	1.76	91	7.66	1.73	1.09	.278	17	7.00	1.41	13	7.77	1.69	-1.36	.186
5. Provide resources	167	9.08	1.04	92	8.86	1.14	1.60	.110	17	8.41	0.87	13	8.46	0.78	-0.16	.872
6. Job that I like	160	6.86	2.18	89	7.16	2.07	-1.06	.289	17	6.88	1.22	13	7.31	1.44	-0.88	.388
7. Performance appraisal fair	164	8.94	1.30	91	8.96	1.17	-0.10	.918	17	8.18	1.29	13	8.62	1.39	-0.90	.378
8. Treat the same	167	9.25	1.00	92	9.27	.98	-0.20	.839	17	8.35	1.27	13	8.85	0.90	-1.19	.245
9. Help gain promotion <sup>2</sup>	155	7.91	1.92	81	7.80	2.10	0.39	.694								
10. Adequate training	166	9.18	1.14	91	9.08	1.07	0.71	.476	17	8.18	1.88	13	8.62	0.96	-0.77	.450
11. Time off for personal needs	166	8.17	1.79	91	8.21	1.72	-0.17	.862	17	7.47	1.33	13	7.54	1.66	-0.12	.902
12. Act in supportive way	166	8.98	1.22	92	8.96	1.19	0.16	.872	17	8.41	1.18	13	9.00	0.82	-1.54	.135

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Excludes participants who responded Not Applicable; <sup>2</sup> These items were not included in the GTO survey; <sup>3</sup> GTO employers rated the importance of host employer obligations; \* p < .05; Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)

**Table 19: Means, standard deviations and independent samples t-test statistics examining differences between direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding extent to which employee obligations were met**

Item	Direct Employers									GTO Employers <sup>2</sup>							
	ERs of Apprentices			ERs of Trainees			Group Differences Statistics			ERs of Apprentices		ERs of Trainees			Group Differences Statistics		
	n <sup>1</sup>	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-test	p	n1	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-test	p	
1. Stay with present employer	157	8.57	1.78	83	8.01	2.39	1.86	.065	17	8.06	0.97	13	8.15	1.21	-0.24	.813	
2. Protect reputation of company	163	8.56	1.41	93	8.54	1.54	0.11	.913	17	8.18	0.81	13	8.46	0.97	-0.88	.387	
3. Put interests of employer first	163	7.72	1.92	92	7.93	1.78	-0.87	.387	17	7.59	1.37	13	8.08	1.60	-0.90	.377	
4. Be open with supervisor/employer	164	7.95	1.86	93	8.13	1.71	-0.76	.450	17	7.35	1.45	13	7.62	1.66	-0.46	.649	
5. Be loyal to company	164	7.95	1.97	92	8.28	1.76	-1.34	.181	17	7.35	0.79	13	7.77	1.30	-1.09	.286	
6. Do non-required tasks	163	7.26	2.19	91	7.67	1.95	-1.49	.137	17	7.41	0.87	13	7.54	1.51	-0.29	.774	
7. Refuse to support competitors	149	7.67	2.17	84	7.60	2.29	0.25	.802	17	6.53	1.91	13	7.15	2.03	-0.86	.395	
8. Spend two years with employer	147	6.53	2.83	73	6.15	2.94	0.92	.356	15	6.80	1.21	13	7.23	1.64	-0.80	.432	
9. Work more hours	151	6.52	2.71	80	6.28	2.67	0.65	.518	17	6.18	2.60	13	6.54	3.15	-0.34	.733	
10. Be willing to accept a transfer	109	6.11	3.17	61	6.48	2.67	-0.76	.447	17	7.29	1.26	13	7.77	1.36	-0.99	.332	
11. Refuse to give outsiders information	147	7.82	2.11	85	7.94	1.87	-0.45	.651	15	7.47	1.77	13	8.38	1.71	-1.39	.176	
12. Become more skilled	163	8.39	1.52	92	8.41	1.75	-0.10	.923	17	7.88	1.49	13	8.85	1.14	-1.93	.064	
13. Work well with others	163	8.68	1.30	93	8.80	1.18	-0.70	.485	17	8.12	1.36	13	8.62	1.19	-1.04	.305	
14. Put in a full day's work	164	8.12	1.85	93	8.23	1.67	-0.45	.655	17	8.29	0.98	13	8.54	1.33	-0.58	.567	
15. Attend work every day	164	8.13	2.06	93	8.09	1.75	0.19	.850	17	8.06	1.03	13	8.46	1.33	-0.93	.357	
16. Always be punctual	163	8.15	1.98	93	8.20	1.88	-0.23	.821	17	8.06	1.03	13	8.31	1.38	-0.57	.575	

Notes. <sup>1</sup> Excludes participants who responded Not Applicable; <sup>2</sup> GTO employers rated the extent to which employees met obligations to the host employer; Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)



**Table 20: Means, standard deviations and independent samples t-test statistics examining differences between direct employers and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding extent to which training obligations were met**

Item	Direct Employers									GTO Employers							
	ERs of Apprentices			ERs of Trainees			Group Differences Statistics			ERs of Apprentices			ERs of Trainees			Group Differences Statistics	
	n <sup>1</sup>	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-test	p	n1	M	SD	n1	M	SD	t-test	p	
1. An identified contact	162	8.56	1.68	93	8.52	2.22	0.16	.873	17	8.35	1.80	12	9.33	0.89	-1.74	.094	
2. Different processes/ experiences	163	8.85	1.14	93	8.66	1.48	1.07	.286	17	8.41	1.00	12	8.33	1.23	0.19	.852	
3. Range of training methods	162	8.64	1.42	92	8.29	1.65	1.70	.091	17	8.47	0.87	12	8.67	0.98	-0.56	.577	
4. Assessment not too easy	158	8.27	1.47	93	7.99	1.86	1.33	.184	17	8.29	1.31	12	8.25	1.36	0.08	.931	
5. Assessment not too hard	157	8.08	1.68	92	8.02	1.95	0.23	.816	17	8.29	1.26	12	8.25	1.29	0.09	.927	
6. regular assessment	161	8.04	1.81	93	8.04	2.07	0.00	.999	17	8.47	1.01	12	9.00	0.95	-1.42	.166	
7. Assessment involving feedback	159	8.11	1.75	92	8.24	1.84	-0.54	.590	17	8.65	1.00	12	9.00	1.13	-0.89	.381	
8. Opportunity to keep learning	163	8.83	1.15	93	8.49	1.68	1.70	.092	17	8.41	0.87	12	8.83	0.72	-1.38	.180	
9. Specific time for training	161	8.53	1.47	93	8.08	1.91	2.00	.047*	17	8.76	0.97	12	8.92	1.24	-0.37	.714	
10. Apply what is learned	163	8.88	1.16	93	8.73	1.36	0.91	.365	17	8.82	0.95	12	9.08	0.79	-0.77	.446	
11. Make mistakes and learn	163	8.58	1.45	93	8.49	1.58	0.42	.674	17	8.53	1.18	12	9.08	1.00	-1.33	.196	

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Excludes participants who responded Not Applicable; \* p < .05; Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)

**Table 21: Means, standard deviations and repeated measures t-test statistic examining differences between extent GTO and host employer obligations have been met**

Item	GTO Employers of Apprentices						GTO Employers of Trainees					
	GTO Obligation		Host Obligation		Statistic		GTO Obligation		Host Obligation		Statistic	
	M	SD	M	SD	t-test	p	M	SD	M	SD	t-test	p
1. Talk about matters	8.94	0.90	7.82	1.38	4.15	.001*	9.15	0.90	8.08	1.50	4.07	.002*
2. Help develop career	8.24	1.75	7.82	1.24	1.38	.186	8.77	1.92	7.92	1.32	2.51	.027*
3. Long-serving employees <sup>1</sup>												
4. Support for personal problems	8.59	1.33	7.00	1.41	3.94	.001*	8.77	1.42	7.77	1.69	2.36	.036*
5. Provide resources	8.76	0.97	8.41	0.87	1.14	.269	8.92	1.04	8.46	0.78	1.90	.082
6. Job that I like	7.47	2.12	6.88	1.22	1.19	.250	8.08	2.02	7.31	1.44	1.59	.137
7. Performance appraisal fair	8.88	1.05	8.18	1.29	1.72	.104	9.38	0.96	8.62	1.39	3.82	.002*
8. Treated the same	8.88	1.36	8.35	1.27	1.21	.245	9.38	0.77	8.85	0.90	2.01	.068
9. Help gain promotion <sup>1</sup>												
10. Adequate training	8.59	1.18	8.18	1.88	1.33	.203	9.15	0.80	8.62	0.96	2.01	.068
11. time off for personal needs	7.65	1.66	7.47	1.33	0.37	.713	8.08	2.43	7.54	1.66	1.39	.188
12. Act in a supportive way	9.29	0.85	8.41	1.18	3.45	.003*	9.62	0.65	9.00	0.82	2.31	.040*

Notes: <sup>1</sup> This question was not included in the GTO survey; \* significant at  $p < .05$ ; Item response range: 0 (obligation not at all met) to 10 (obligation completely met)

**Table 22: Means, standard deviations and repeated measures t-test statistics examining differences between extent employee obligations to GTO and host employer have been met**

Item	GTO Employers of Apprentices						GTO Employers of Trainees					
	Obligation to GTO		Obligation to Host		Statistic		Obligation to GTO		Obligation to Host		Statistic	
	M	SD	M	SD	t-test	p	M	SD	M	SD	t-test	p
1. Stay with present employer	7.47	1.18	8.06	0.97	-1.57	.136	8.46	0.97	8.15	1.21	0.89	.392
2. Protect reputation of company	7.00	1.17	8.18	0.81	-3.51	.003*	8.15	1.21	8.46	0.97	-1.07	.303
3. Put interests of employer first												
4. Be open with supervisor/employer	7.59	1.23	7.35	1.45	0.57	.579	8.31	1.18	7.62	1.66	1.81	.095
5. Be loyal to company	6.24	1.25	7.35	0.79	-3.78	.002*	7.69	1.18	7.77	1.30	-0.21	.837
6. Do non-required tasks <sup>1</sup>												
7. Refuse to support competitors	6.19	2.32	6.50	1.97	-0.77	.453	7.08	1.60	7.15	2.03	-0.18	.861
9. Work more hours	5.82	3.03	6.18	2.60	-1.06	.303	6.54	3.02	6.54	3.15	0.00	1.00
10. Be willing to accept a transfer	7.06	1.12	7.25	1.29	-0.47	.646	8.00	0.91	7.77	1.36	0.82	.427
11. Refuse to give outsiders information <sup>1</sup>												
12. Become more skilled	8.44	0.89	7.88	1.54	1.31	.208	8.46	0.88	8.85	1.14	-1.44	.175
13. Work well with others	8.00	0.73	8.13	1.41	-0.46	.652	8.46	1.05	8.62	1.19	-0.46	.656
14. Put in a full day's work	8.13	0.81	8.25	1.00	-0.52	.609	8.23	0.83	8.54	1.33	-1.07	.303
15. Attend work every day	7.25	1.61	8.06	1.06	-3.31	.005*	8.15	1.40	8.46	1.33	-1.00	.337
16. Always be punctual	7.31	1.45	8.06	1.06	-2.53	.023*	8.38	1.04	8.31	1.38	0.25	.808

Notes: <sup>1</sup> This question was not included in the GTO survey; \* significant at p < .05; Item response range: 0 (not at all met) to 10 (completely met).

## Direct employed mean importance and met obligations

The mean scores for employer, employee and training obligations for direct employed apprentices and trainees and employers of apprentices and trainees were calculated by summing and averaging the individual item ratings. Table 23 summarises the mean ratings of employers and employees in relation to importance and met obligations. Overall the mean ratings of employers of apprentices and trainees relating to the importance of the three types of obligations and the extent to which these obligations were met, were similar. This was also the case for apprentices and trainees, except for the extent to which employer obligations were perceived to have been met. Trainees rated these obligations as being met to a lesser extent, compared with the other groups. In comparing the overall mean ratings of employers and employees, employers were found to rate employer obligations as being more important and as being met more often. The differences in ratings between the two groups were also significant. Employees rated the importance of training obligations as slightly more important, compared with employers but the difference in ratings was not significant. Employers rated the extent to which training obligations were met significantly higher than employees. There was no difference in the mean ratings of importance of employee obligations between the two groups, however employees rated these obligations as being met more often, compared with employers and the difference in ratings between the two groups was also significant. Overall, both employers and employees perceived training obligations to be more important than employer or employee obligations. Employees also rated training obligations as being met to a greater extent than employer obligations. Despite the significant differences between employers and employees with regards to met obligations, the overall mean ratings in excess of 7.0 suggest that the psychological contract of both parties is being met relatively well.

**Table 23. Means and independent samples t-test statistics examining differences between employers and employees regarding mean importance and met ratings**

Scale		Employers			Employees			t-test1
		Apps	Trnees	Tot ER	Apps	Trnees	Tot EE	
	Importance of Obligations							
1	Employer obligations	8.5	8.4	8.5	8.1	8.2	8.2	2.7*
2	Employee obligations	8.3	8.0	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.2	0.4
3	Training obligations	8.6	8.7	8.7	8.9	8.6	8.8	-1.4
	Met Obligations							
1	Employer obligations	8.6	8.4	8.5	7.3	6.7	7.0	7.3*
2	Employee obligations	7.9	7.8	7.9	8.6	8.4	8.5	-4.4*
3	Training obligations	8.5	8.4	8.4	7.8	7.6	7.7	4.1*

Notes: Apps = apprentices; Trnees = trainees; Tot ER = total employers; Tot EE = total employees; 1 Group differences t-test comparing total employers with total employees; \* significant at  $p < .05$ ; Item response range: 0 (not at all met) to 10 (completely met).

## GTO employment

GTO employers and GTO-employed employees were asked to rate the importance of employer, employee and training obligations and the extent to which these obligations were met using an 11-point Likert scale where 0 = (not at all important/ not at all met) to 10 = (extremely

important/ completely met). Group differences were calculated using the independent samples t-test statistic, with an alpha level set at .05. Employers and employees rated employer and employee obligations in relation to the host company.

A comparison of the ratings of employers and employees regarding the importance of individual employer, employee and training obligations is shown in Tables 24, 25 and 26. There was some agreement between employers and employees about the most and least important employer obligations. As shown in Table 24, both groups rated treated the same as one of the most important obligations, while job that I like were rated as the least important employer obligation. There were significant group differences regarding the ratings of three employer obligations. In each case, employers rated the obligation as being more important compared with employees.

There was also general agreement between employers and employees regarding the employee obligations considered most and least important (see Table 25). Always be punctual and attend work every day were rated as two of the most important obligations, while spend two years with employer and work more hours were rated as least important employee obligations by both groups. There were group differences regarding the importance of one employee obligation, with employers rating the obligation as being more important compared with employees.

Table 26 shows that there was general agreement between employers and employees about the most and least important training obligations. Both groups rated apply what is learned and opportunity to keep learning as two of the most important, and assessment not too easy and assessment not too hard as two of the least important training obligations. There were significant group differences regarding the importance ratings of two items. In both cases, employers rated the obligation as being more important compared with employees.

**Table 24: Means and independent t-test statistic examining differences between employers and employees regarding importance of employer obligations**

	Item	Employers						Employees						Group Differences Statistic	
		Apps		Trnees		Tot ER		Apps		Trnees		Tot EE		t-test <sup>1</sup>	p
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
1	Talk about matters	8.41	1.77	8.69	1.70	8.53	1.72	8.43	1.83	8.67	1.53	8.48	1.77	0.15	.878
2	Help develop career	8.59	1.58	8.92	1.55	8.73	1.55	8.84	1.52	8.50	1.76	8.77	1.58	-0.10	.916
3	Long-serving employees <sup>2</sup>														
4	Support for personal problems	7.53	1.94	8.15	1.77	7.80	1.86	6.84	2.59	7.06	2.22	6.88	2.51	2.35	.023*
5	Provide resources	9.06	1.14	9.15	1.07	9.10	1.09	8.67	1.52	8.03	2.22	8.53	1.71	1.77	.079
6	Job that I like	6.65	1.54	7.54	1.51	7.03	1.56	5.92	2.83	5.75	2.73	5.88	2.80	3.22	.002*
7	Performance appraisal fair	8.71	1.45	8.77	1.48	8.73	1.44	8.14	1.76	7.35	2.11	7.96	1.86	2.15	.033*
8	Treated the same	9.06	1.34	9.23	1.01	9.13	1.20	8.96	1.33	9.19	1.17	9.01	1.30	0.48	.632
9	Help gain promotion <sup>2</sup>														
10	Adequate training	9.00	2.00	9.08	0.95	9.03	1.61	9.13	1.23	8.95	1.39	9.09	1.27	-0.23	.821
11	Time off for personal needs	7.06	1.78	7.77	1.79	7.37	1.79	8.11	1.98	7.19	1.93	7.91	2.00	-1.40	.163
12	Act in supportive way	8.88	1.87	9.23	0.93	9.03	1.52	8.59	1.37	8.49	1.52	8.57	1.40	1.66	.099

Notes: Apps = apprentices; Trnees = trainees; Tot ER = total employers; Tot EE = total employees; <sup>1</sup> Group differences t-test comparing total employers with total employees; <sup>2</sup> This item was not deemed relevant to GTO employers and was excluded from the employer survey; \* significant at  $p < .05$ ; Item response range: 0 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important).

**Table 25: Means and independent t-test statistic examining differences between employers and employees regarding importance of employee obligations**

Item	Employers						Employees						Group Differences Statistic	
	Apps		Trnees		Tot ER		Apps		Trnees		Tot EE		t-test <sup>1</sup>	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
1 Stay with present employer	7.88	2.26	8.08	1.66	7.97	1.99	7.55	2.72	9.00	1.90	7.86	2.63	0.22	.828
2 Protect reputation of company	8.71	1.83	9.15	1.07	8.90	1.54	8.75	1.65	9.22	1.06	8.85	1.55	0.18	.860
3 Put interests of employer first	8.71	1.53	8.92	1.44	8.80	1.47	8.35	1.83	8.78	1.49	8.44	1.77	1.05	.294
4 Be open with supervisor/employer	8.88	1.36	8.92	1.44	8.90	1.37	8.44	1.83	8.92	1.48	8.54	1.77	1.06	.291
5 Be loyal to company	8.65	1.77	8.85	1.28	8.73	1.55	8.66	1.53	8.86	1.49	8.70	1.52	0.11	.915
6 Do non-required tasks	7.94	1.48	8.08	1.44	8.00	1.44	8.44	1.65	8.92	1.36	8.54	1.60	-1.74	.084
7 Refuse to support competitors	6.47	2.00	7.15	1.99	6.77	1.99	6.68	2.69	6.94	2.95	6.73	2.74	0.08	.935
8 Spend two years with employer	6.06	1.95	7.23	1.54	6.57	1.85	5.91	3.13	6.39	2.79	6.01	3.06	1.37	.176
9 Work more hours	5.65	2.57	6.31	2.69	5.93	2.60	7.09	2.72	5.76	3.51	6.81	2.95	-1.53	.128
10 Willing to accept a transfer	7.35	1.62	7.15	1.82	7.27	1.68	6.75	2.60	6.59	3.14	6.72	2.71	1.49	.141
11 Refuse to give information	8.59	1.84	9.00	1.35	8.77	1.63	7.40	2.60	8.76	2.10	7.69	2.56	3.03	.004*
12 Become more skilled	9.00	0.93	9.08	1.32	9.03	1.10	9.11	1.26	9.46	0.87	9.18	1.20	-0.65	.517
13 Work well with others	9.24	0.83	9.08	1.32	9.17	1.05	9.05	1.38	9.41	0.93	9.13	1.30	0.16	.873
14 Put in a full day's work	9.35	0.86	9.46	0.97	9.40	0.89	9.16	1.20	9.59	0.72	9.26	1.13	0.66	.512
15 Attend work every day	9.41	0.87	9.23	1.54	9.33	1.18	9.28	1.23	9.51	0.87	9.33	1.16	0.01	.993
16 Always be punctual	9.41	0.87	9.46	0.97	9.43	0.90	9.22	1.27	9.46	0.87	9.27	1.20	0.71	.477

Notes: Apps = apprentices; Trnees = trainees; Tot ER = total employers; Tot EE = total employees; <sup>1</sup> Group differences t-test comparing total employers with total employees; \* significant at p < .05; Item response range: 0 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important).

**Table 26: Means and independent t-test statistic examining differences between employers and employees regarding importance of training obligations**

Item	Employers						Employees						Group Differences Statistic		
	Apps		Trnees		Tot ER		Apps		Trnees		Tot EE		t-test <sup>1</sup>	p	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
1	An identified contact	8.88	1.80	9.08	1.26	8.97	1.56	8.01	2.07	9.03	1.34	8.23	1.98	1.93	.054
2	Different processes/ experiences	8.94	1.03	8.85	1.34	8.90	1.15	8.58	1.79	9.05	1.33	8.68	1.71	0.66	.508
3	Range of training methods	8.76	1.25	8.77	1.54	8.77	1.36	8.67	1.50	8.68	1.65	8.68	1.53	0.30	.762
4	Assessment not too easy	8.29	1.31	8.08	1.66	8.20	1.45	7.92	1.90	8.53	1.52	8.06	1.84	0.40	.690
5	Assessment not too hard	7.88	1.32	8.00	1.63	7.93	1.44	7.69	1.93	8.42	1.82	7.85	1.93	0.28	.780
6	Regular assessment	8.88	1.17	9.08	1.26	8.97	1.19	8.07	1.75	8.63	1.67	8.19	1.75	3.05	.004*
7	Assessment involving feedback	9.00	1.06	8.92	1.26	8.97	1.13	7.97	2.05	8.95	1.29	8.18	1.95	3.08	.003*
8	Opportunity to keep learning	9.06	1.09	8.92	1.32	9.00	1.17	8.87	1.53	9.32	1.14	8.97	1.46	0.12	.901
9	Specific time for training	9.06	1.09	9.15	1.21	9.10	1.12	8.59	1.69	9.03	1.46	8.69	1.65	1.32	.190
10	Apply what is learned	9.12	0.99	9.00	1.29	9.07	1.11	8.75	1.54	9.18	1.23	8.84	1.49	0.78	.435
11	Make mistakes and learn	8.82	1.29	9.08	1.26	8.93	1.26	8.67	1.63	9.00	1.41	8.75	1.59	0.61	.540

Notes: Apps = apprentices; Trnees = trainees; Tot ER = total employers; Tot EE = total employees; <sup>1</sup> Group differences t-test comparing total employers with total employees; \* significant at p < .05; Item response range: 0 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important).



GTO employer and employee ratings regarding the extent to which employer, employee and training obligations were perceived to have been met are shown in Tables 27 to 29. Table 27 shows that there was general agreement among employers and employees regarding the met obligation ratings for employer obligations. Both groups rated provide resources as an obligation met most often and job that I like and support for personal problems as employer obligations met least often. There were no significant differences between groups in the extent to which employer obligations were met.

As shown in Table 28, there were some differences between employers and employees regarding the met obligation ratings for employee obligations. Both groups rated put in a full day's work as an employee obligation met most often. Employers also rated work well with others and become more skilled, while employees rated attend work every day and always be punctual as obligations being met most often. Both groups similarly rated refuse to support competitors as an employee obligation met least often. Employers additionally rated work more hours and do non-required tasks while employees rated willing to accept a transfer and stay with present employer as employee obligations met least often. There were significant group differences regarding the extent to which 11 obligations were met. Employees rated each of the 11 obligations as being met more often compared with employers.

There were some differences between employers and employees regarding the extent to which training obligations were perceived to have been met, as shown in Table 29. Both groups similarly rated apply what is learned as an obligation most often met and assessment not too hard as an obligation met least often. Additionally, employers rated specific time for training and assessment involving feedback and employees rated an identified contact as other training obligations met most often. Different processes/experiences and assessment not too easy were additionally rated by employers and range of training methods and regular assessment were rated by employees as other obligations met least often. There were significant group differences regarding the extent to which four training obligations were met. In each instance, employers rated the training obligation as being met more often compared with employees.

For each GTO respondent group, mean scores for employer, employee and training obligations were calculated by summing and averaging the individual item ratings. Table 30 summarises the mean ratings of employers and employees in relation to importance and met obligations. Overall, GTO employers of trainees rated the importance of the three types of obligations as being more important and being met to a greater extent compared with GTO employers of apprentices. This was also the case for GTO trainees who, except for employer obligations, also rated importance and the extent to which obligations were perceived to have been met higher than GTO apprentices. In comparing the overall mean ratings of GTO employers and employees, employers were found to rate the three types of obligations as being more important and employer and training obligations as being met to a greater extent, although the differences in ratings between the two groups was not significant. Compared with GTO employers, GTO employees rated employee obligations as being met more often and the difference in ratings was significant. Overall, the mean ratings in excess of 7.5 suggest that the psychological contract of all parties is being met well.

**Table 27: Means and independent t-test statistic examining differences between employers and employees regarding extent to which employer obligations were met**

Item	Employers						Employees						Group Differences Statistic	
	Apps		Trnees		Tot ER		Apps		Trnees		Tot EE		t-test <sup>1</sup>	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
1 Talk about matters	7.82	1.38	8.08	1.50	7.93	1.41	7.80	2.27	8.54	1.97	7.96	2.22	-0.8	.934
2 Help develop career	7.82	1.24	7.92	1.32	7.87	1.25	8.01	1.99	8.28	2.12	8.07	2.02	-0.74	.463
3 Long-serving employees <sup>2</sup>														
4 Support for personal problems	7.00	1.41	7.77	1.69	7.33	1.56	7.23	2.51	7.55	2.81	7.30	2.57	0.10	.918
5 Provide resources	8.41	0.87	8.46	0.78	8.43	0.82	8.51	1.65	8.62	1.80	8.54	1.68	-0.53	.596
6 Job that I like	6.88	1.22	7.31	1.44	7.07	1.31	6.85	2.29	7.46	2.68	6.98	2.39	0.30	.765
7 Performance appraisal fair	8.18	1.29	8.62	1.39	8.37	1.33	7.98	1.76	8.38	2.15	8.07	1.85	0.84	.399
8 Treated the same	8.35	1.27	8.85	0.90	8.57	1.13	8.32	2.01	8.43	2.61	8.34	2.15	0.85	.400
9 Help gain promotion <sup>2</sup>														
10 Adequate training	8.18	1.88	8.62	0.96	8.37	1.54	8.27	1.82	8.81	1.52	8.39	1.77	-0.06	.955
11 Time off for personal needs	7.47	1.33	7.54	1.66	7.50	1.46	8.17	2.15	8.09	2.27	8.15	2.17	-1.58	.116
12 Act in supportive way	8.41	1.18	9.00	0.82	8.67	1.06	8.30	1.81	8.43	2.19	8.33	1.89	1.41	.163

Notes: Apps = apprentices; Trnees = trainees; Tot ER = total employers; Tot EE = total employees; <sup>1</sup> Group differences t-test comparing total employers with total employees; <sup>2</sup> This item was not deemed relevant to GTO employers and was excluded from the employer survey; Item response range: 0 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important).

**Table 28: Means and independent t-test statistic examining differences between employers and employees regarding extent to which employee obligations were met**

Item	Employers						Employees						Group Differences Statistic	
	Apps		Trnees		Tot ER		Apps		Trnees		Tot EE		t-test <sup>1</sup>	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
1 Stay with present employer	8.06	0.97	8.15	1.21	8.10	1.06	7.40	3.25	9.06	2.50	7.77	3.17	1.00	.316
2 Protect reputation of company	8.18	0.81	8.46	0.97	8.30	0.88	8.63	1.77	9.51	0.96	8.82	1.66	-2.56	.013*
3 Put interests of employer first	7.59	1.37	8.08	1.60	7.80	1.47	8.59	1.62	9.24	1.26	8.74	1.56	-3.05	.003*
4 Be open with supervisor/employer	7.35	1.45	7.62	1.66	7.47	1.52	8.35	1.94	8.89	1.61	8.47	1.88	-2.75	.007*
5 Be loyal to company	7.35	0.79	7.77	1.30	7.53	1.04	8.86	1.43	9.24	1.26	8.95	1.40	-5.27	.000*
6 Do non-required tasks	7.41	0.87	7.54	1.51	7.47	1.17	8.51	1.68	9.32	0.99	8.69	1.58	-4.05	.000*
7 Refuse to support competitors	6.53	1.91	7.15	2.03	6.80	1.95	7.51	2.46	8.00	2.50	7.61	2.46	-1.70	.091
8 Spend two years with employer <sup>2</sup>														
9 Work more hours	6.18	2.60	6.54	3.15	6.33	2.81	8.29	1.86	8.05	2.17	8.24	1.93	-3.57	.001*
10 Willing to accept a transfer	7.29	1.26	7.77	1.36	7.50	1.31	7.43	2.69	6.96	3.50	7.34	2.85	0.46	.647
11 Refuse to give information	7.47	1.77	8.38	1.71	7.89	1.77	8.30	1.96	8.29	2.74	8.30	2.14	-0.94	.347
12 Become more skilled	7.88	1.49	8.85	1.14	8.30	1.42	8.75	1.39	9.21	1.28	8.85	1.37	-2.03	.044*
13 Work well with others	8.12	1.36	8.62	1.19	8.33	1.29	8.87	1.36	9.34	1.19	8.97	1.34	-2.42	.017*
14 Put in a full day's work	8.29	0.98	8.54	1.33	8.40	1.13	9.04	1.27	9.61	0.75	9.16	1.19	-3.25	.001*
15 Attend work every day	8.06	1.03	8.46	1.33	8.23	1.16	9.24	1.18	9.53	0.89	9.30	1.13	-4.75	.000*
16 Always be punctual	8.06	1.03	8.31	1.38	8.17	1.18	9.08	1.24	9.47	0.92	9.17	1.19	-4.26	.000*

Notes: Apps = apprentices; Trnees = trainees; Tot ER = total employers; Tot EE = total employees; <sup>1</sup> Group differences t-test comparing total employers with total employees; <sup>2</sup> This item was not deemed relevant at this stage of the apprenticeship/traineeship for met obligations and was excluded from the employee survey; \* significant at p < .05; Item response range: 0 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important).

**Table 29: Means and independent t-test statistic examining differences between employers and employees regarding extent to which training obligations were met**

Item	Employers						Employees						Group Differences Statistic	
	Apps		Trnees		Tot ER		Apps		Trnees		Tot EE		t-test <sup>1</sup>	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
1 An identified contact	8.35	1.80	9.33	0.89	8.76	1.55	8.27	2.15	9.14	1.38	8.46	2.03	0.76	.445
2 Different processes/ experiences	8.41	1.00	8.33	1.23	8.38	1.08	8.08	1.83	8.78	1.55	8.22	1.79	0.45	.653
3 Range of training methods	8.47	0.87	8.67	0.98	8.55	0.91	8.21	1.68	7.92	2.18	8.15	1.80	1.84	.069
4 Assessment not too easy	8.29	1.31	8.25	1.36	8.28	1.31	8.06	1.71	8.59	1.67	8.18	1.71	0.36	.099
5 Assessment not too hard	8.29	1.26	8.25	1.29	8.28	1.25	7.84	1.83	8.59	1.92	8.01	1.88	0.98	.270
6 Regular assessment	8.47	1.01	9.00	0.95	8.69	1.00	7.99	1.70	8.71	1.83	8.16	1.75	2.30	.024*
7 Assessment involving feedback	8.65	1.00	9.00	1.13	8.79	1.05	8.13	1.79	8.94	1.76	8.31	1.81	2.02	.048*
8 Opportunity to keep learning	8.41	0.87	8.83	0.72	8.59	0.82	8.57	1.45	8.97	1.62	8.66	1.50	-0.38	.706
9 Specific time for training	8.76	0.97	8.92	1.24	8.83	1.07	8.30	1.74	7.87	2.60	8.20	1.96	2.51	.014*
10 Apply what is learned	8.82	0.95	9.08	0.79	8.93	0.88	8.26	1.67	8.76	1.46	8.37	1.64	2.70	.009*
11 Make mistakes and learn	8.53	1.18	9.08	1.00	8.76	1.12	8.20	1.84	8.63	1.99	8.29	1.88	1.84	.071

Notes: Apps = apprentices; Trnees = trainees; Tot ER = total employers; Tot EE = total employees; <sup>1</sup> Group differences t-test comparing total employers with total employees; \* significant at  $p < .05$ ; Item response range: 0 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important).

**Table 30: Means, standard deviations and independent samples t-test statistics examining differences between employers and employees regarding mean importance and met ratings**

Scale	Employers						Employees						Group Differences Statistics	
	Apps		Trnees		Tot ER		Apps		Trnees		Tot EE		t-test <sup>1</sup>	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Importance of Obligations														
1 Employer obligations	8.29	1.28	8.65	0.95	8.45	1.15	8.18	1.10	7.96	1.09	8.14	1.10	1.42	.158
2 Employee obligations	8.20	0.94	8.45	0.99	8.31	0.95	8.17	1.17	8.41	1.15	8.22	1.16	0.38	.704
3 Training obligations	8.79	0.97	8.81	1.16	8.80	1.04	8.41	1.34	8.97	1.09	8.53	1.31	1.06	.288
Met Obligations														
1 Employer obligations	7.85	0.90	8.21	0.91	8.01	0.91	7.82	1.63	7.79	1.97	7.81	1.70	0.85	.399
2 Employee obligations	7.54	0.76	7.97	1.03	7.74	0.91	8.33	1.22	8.79	1.10	8.41	1.21	-3.27	.002*
3 Training obligations	8.50	0.76	8.79	0.76	8.62	0.76	8.24	1.33	8.59	1.46	8.31	1.36	1.70	.094

Notes: Apps = apprentices; Trnees = trainees; Tot ER = total employers; Tot EE = total employees; <sup>1</sup> Group differences t-test comparing total employers with total employees; \* significant at  $p < .05$ ; Item response range: 0 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important).

GTO employers and employees were asked whether being employed by a GTO provided a different experience for employees from being directly employed by a company. As can be seen in Table 31, well over half of GTO employees and all but one GTO employers thought that being employed by a GTO did provide a different experience. Some GTO employers and employees provided qualitative comments to explain why this experience was different. For example, GTO comments included ‘In a lot of cases we are more professional and organised and up to date’; five of the ten who made comments used the word ‘support’. Many of the apprentice/trainee comments used the word ‘security’, and one said ‘someone is always looking out for you’. A few apprentice comments were negative: ‘group training makes you blend in with a crowd and you get no individual support’ and ‘(you) could be seen as expendable and not as host’s own apprentice’.

**Table 31. Does being employed by a GTO provide a different experience from being directly employed by a company?**

Response	GTO Employees		GTO Employers	
	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	93	56.7	29	96.7
No	8	4.9	0	0
Makes no difference	23	14.0	1	3.3
Don’t know	40	24.4	0	0
Total	164	100.0	30	100.0

GTO employers and employees were also asked who had the major responsibility for the commitments and obligations due to the apprentice/trainee. Table 32 shows that around two-thirds of GTO employers and employees alike perceived that both the GTO and the host employer had equal responsibility for meeting the commitments and obligations.

**Table 32. Who has the major responsibility for the commitments and obligations that you feel are due to the apprentice/trainee?**

Response	GTO Employees		GTO Employers			
	All obligations		Job-related obligations		Training-related obligations	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
GTO	26	15.8	9	30.0	8	26.7
Host employer	28	17.0	2	6.7	3	10.0
Both equally	111	67.3	19	63.3	19	63.3
Total	165	100.0	30	100.0	30	100.0

GTO employers were asked to rate the importance of employer and employee obligations and the extent to which these obligations were met in relation to both the GTO and the host employer. A summary of the mean ratings is shown in Table 33. GTO employers perceived that their obligations as an employer were more important than that of the host employer and that they also met their employer obligations to a greater extent than the host employer. In both instances, the differences in ratings were significant. Perceptions of the importance of employee obligations to the GTO and the host employer, and the extent to which employees met these obligations to each party, were similar.

**Table 33. Means and repeated measures t-test statistics examining differences between GTO employers mean ratings of GTO related and host employer related obligations**

Scale	GTO Employer Ratings			t-test
		Obligation to GTO	Obligation to host	
	Importance of Obligations			
1	Employer Obligations	8.8	8.4	2.1*
2	Employee Obligations	8.4	8.3	1.3
	Met Obligations			
1	Employer Obligations	8.6	8.0	3.4*
2	Employee Obligations	7.6	7.7	-0.8

Notes: \* significant at  $p < .05$ ; Item response range: 0 (not at all important/not at all met) to 10 (extremely important / completely met).

## Pre-apprenticeships

Approximately one fifth of the survey sample had completed a pre-apprenticeship ( $n = 46$ ). A comparison of the ratings of apprentices that did and did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding the importance of individual employer, employee and training obligations is shown in Tables 34, 35 and 36. Tables 37 – 39 show the extent to which these obligations were met and Table 40 provides a summary of the overall means relating to the importance of and met obligations for each group. In each table,  $n$  denotes the number of apprentices who responded to the individual items. While significance of group difference testing was not conducted due to extreme differences in group size, overall perceived differences between the two groups appears to be slight. In summary, apprentices who had completed a pre-apprenticeship expected and reported less support with personal problems and less likelihood of ‘a job they liked’ compared with other apprentices. Pre-apprenticeship apprentices perceived a greater obligation to complete their apprenticeship but less of an obligation to stay with their employer after completion. Compared with other apprentices, those who had completed a pre-apprenticeship also had lower expectations about having specific time set aside for training. Overall, pre-apprenticeship apprentices had slightly lower expectations of their employer and of their training, and slightly higher expectations of their own obligations. On the whole, training obligations appeared to be met slightly better for apprentices who had completed a pre-apprenticeship, than other apprentices.

**Table 34. Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices who did or did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding importance of employer obligations.**

Item	Apprentices who completed a pre-apprenticeship			Apprentices who did not complete a pre-apprenticeship		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
1 Talk about matters	46	8.43	1.95	230	8.59	1.81
2 Help develop career	46	9.07	1.40	228	8.89	1.52
3 Long-serving employees	46	8.13	1.70	228	8.03	1.78
4 Support for personal problems	46	5.98	2.89	226	6.92	2.41
5 Provide resources	46	8.96	1.43	223	8.83	1.54
6 Job that I like	46	5.41	2.52	227	5.84	2.96
7 Performance appraisal fair	45	8.22	1.78	224	8.32	1.84
8 Treated the same	46	9.39	1.15	229	9.00	1.45
9 Help gain promotion	44	6.68	2.78	229	7.08	2.67
10 Adequate training	46	9.24	1.35	228	9.22	1.25
11 Time off for personal needs	46	8.02	2.23	228	7.98	2.15
12 Act in supportive way	46	8.85	1.37	230	8.39	1.83

**Table 35. Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices who did or did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding importance of employee obligations.**

Item	Apprentices who completed a pre-apprenticeship			Apprentices who did not complete a pre-apprenticeship		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
1 Stay with present employer	46	8.76	1.82	231	7.91	2.67
2 Protect reputation of company	46	9.24	1.21	230	8.72	1.82
3 Put interests of employer first	46	8.57	1.42	229	8.14	2.05
4 Be open with supervisor/employer	46	8.76	1.70	230	8.50	1.88
5 Be loyal to company	46	8.91	1.56	230	8.63	1.64
6 Do non-required tasks	46	8.30	1.66	230	8.50	1.72
7 Refuse to support competitors	42	6.71	2.79	226	7.00	2.80
8 Spend two years with employer	45	5.69	2.96	229	6.35	3.19
9 Work more hours	45	6.80	2.89	229	6.99	2.777
10 Willing to accept a transfer	45	6.53	2.93	222	6.32	2.95
11 Refuse to give information	46	7.28	2.94	226	7.49	2.65
12 Become more skilled	46	9.33	1.10	229	9.24	1.15
13 Work well with others	46	9.37	1.04	230	9.15	1.32
14 Put in a full day's work	45	9.31	1.06	228	9.20	1.28
15 Attend work every day	46	9.54	.91	227	9.33	1.17
16 Always be punctual	46	9.50	.91	230	9.36	1.15

**Table 36. Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices who did or did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding importance of training obligations.**

Item	Apprentices who completed a pre-apprenticeship			Apprentices who did not complete a pre-apprenticeship		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
1 An identified contact	45	7.84	2.42	225	8.31	1.86
2 Different processes/ experiences	45	8.84	1.75	226	8.95	1.55
3 Range of training methods	45	8.82	1.60	224	8.98	1.32
4 Assessment not too easy	45	7.91	2.11	224	8.23	1.98
5 Assessment not too hard	45	7.82	2.02	227	7.83	2.21
6 Regular assessment	45	8.11	1.97	227	8.37	1.74
7 Assessment involving feedback	45	8.20	2.29	226	8.33	1.91
8 Opportunity to keep learning	45	8.78	1.72	226	9.22	1.20
9 Specific time for training	45	8.16	2.56	227	8.98	1.37
10 Apply what is learned	45	8.76	1.65	227	9.08	1.36
11 Make mistakes and learn	45	8.76	1.63	227	8.95	1.48



**Table 37. Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices who did or did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding extent to which employer obligations have been met.**

Item	Apprentices who completed a pre-apprenticeship			Apprentices who did not complete a pre-apprenticeship		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
1 Talk about matters	42	7.12	2.59	227	7.70	2.49
2 Help develop career	43	7.95	1.98	227	7.78	2.39
3 Long-serving employees	35	7.54	1.70	203	7.46	2.48
4 Support for personal problems	38	6.34	3.03	206	7.17	2.74
5 Provide resources	43	8.42	1.78	225	8.21	2.14
6 Job that I like	42	6.10	2.38	216	6.69	2.63
7 Performance appraisal fair	42	7.64	2.24	214	7.71	2.26
8 Treated the same	43	8.09	2.44	226	7.95	2.57
9 Help gain promotion	36	6.08	3.29	187	6.86	2.76
10 Adequate training	43	8.02	1.90	227	7.96	2.39
11 Time off for personal needs	42	7.74	2.60	219	8.17	2.31
12 Act in supportive way	44	8.25	2.03	226	7.85	2.45

**Table 38. Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices who did or did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding extent to which employee obligations have been met.**

Item	Apprentices who completed a pre-apprenticeship			Apprentices who did not complete a pre-apprenticeship		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
1 Stay with present employer	39	8.67	2.41	197	8.38	2.75
2 Protect reputation of company	44	8.91	1.55	226	8.99	1.59
3 Put interests of employer first	43	8.56	1.50	225	8.79	1.59
4 Be open with supervisor/employer	44	8.48	1.86	228	8.55	1.82
5 Be loyal to company	43	8.74	1.65	227	8.99	1.56
6 Do non-required tasks	44	8.48	1.99	227	8.84	1.51
7 Refuse to support competitors	37	7.70	2.79	203	7.87	2.56
8 Spend two years with employer <sup>1</sup>						
9 Work more hours	42	8.36	2.12	225	8.50	1.97
10 Willing to accept a transfer	39	5.41	3.39	209	4.25	3.25
11 Refuse to give information	40	8.30	2.23	211	8.30	2.22
12 Become more skilled	44	8.77	1.54	227	9.05	1.34
13 Work well with others	43	8.95	1.38	229	9.20	1.19
14 Put in a full day's work	44	9.11	1.26	228	9.31	1.07
15 Attend work every day	44	9.45	1.04	229	9.38	1.10
16 Always be punctual	44	9.25	1.16	229	9.35	1.07

Note: <sup>1</sup> The extent to which this item was met for pre-apprenticeship apprentices was deemed not applicable and the item was therefore excluded.

**Table 39. Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices who did or did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding extent to which training obligations have been met.**

Item	Apprentices who completed a pre-apprenticeship			Apprentices who did not complete a pre-apprenticeship		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
1 An identified contact	41	7.95	2.74	221	8.27	2.11
2 Different processes/ experiences	43	8.09	2.16	224	8.04	2.20
3 Range of training methods	43	8.30	1.91	222	7.97	2.23
4 Assessment not too easy	42	8.17	1.68	219	7.82	2.31
5 Assessment not too hard	42	7.74	2.00	220	7.75	2.32
6 Scale Regular assessment	42	7.79	1.98	217	7.84	2.24
7 Assessment involving feedback	41	8.10	1.93	220	7.84	2.29
8 Opportunity to keep learning	42	8.45	1.71	223	8.28	2.10
9 Importance of obligations						
Specific time for training	42	8.02	2.15	222	7.91	2.47
Employer obligations	44	8.03	1.06	210	8.12	1.20
Apply what is learned	43	8.05	2.06	224	8.20	2.08
Employee obligations	38	8.27	1.09	207	8.17	1.26
Make mistakes and learn	43	7.95	2.17	224	8.26	2.05
Training obligations	45	8.36	1.52	214	8.73	1.17
<b>Met Obligations</b>						
Employer obligations	25	7.54	1.75	159	7.54	2.07
Employee obligations	27	8.36	1.06	164	8.47	1.11
Training obligations	35	8.16	1.49	211	8.01	1.81

**Table 40. Means and standard deviations examining differences between apprentices who did or did not complete a pre-apprenticeship regarding mean importance and met ratings.**

Scale	Apprentices who completed a pre-apprenticeship			Apprentices who did not complete a pre-apprenticeship		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
<b>Importance of obligations</b>						
Employer obligations	44	8.03	1.06	210	8.12	1.20
Employee obligations	38	8.27	1.09	207	8.17	1.26
Training obligations	45	8.36	1.52	214	8.73	1.17
<b>Met Obligations</b>						
Employer obligations	25	7.54	1.75	159	7.54	2.07
Employee obligations	27	8.36	1.06	164	8.47	1.11
Training obligations	35	8.16	1.49	211	8.01	1.81

## High and low obligation breach and fulfilment

A series of cross tabulations were calculated to explore the characteristics of direct employees and employers who reported high or low breach or fulfilment of obligations. Similar cross tabulations were not calculated for GTO employers and GTO employed apprentices and trainees due to the fact that apprentices and trainees are placed into multiple organisations.

### 1. Apprentices/trainees

Employee ratings regarding the extent to which they met 15 obligations to their employer (employee obligations) were summed to create an overall employee fulfilment score, ranging from 0 (no fulfilment) to 150 (high fulfilment). The majority of employees reported over-fulfilling their obligations to their employer: 76% of apprentices and 65% of trainees reporting high employee obligation fulfilment (mean score  $\geq 130$ ). No employees reported low obligation fulfilment (mean score  $\leq 30$ ).

Similarly, employee ratings of the extent to which they perceived their employer met 12 obligations (employer obligations) and 11 training obligations were calculated. Items were initially reverse scored and then summed to create an overall employer breach score, ranging from 0 (no breach) to 120 (high breach); and an overall training breach score which ranged from 0 (no breach) to 110 (high breach). Just under half of all apprentices (47%) and a third of trainees reported low employer breach of obligations (mean score  $\leq 24$ ). Similarly, 54% of apprentices and 42% of trainees reported low breach of training obligations (mean score  $\leq 22$ ). Few respondents experienced high breach of obligations. One apprentice and three trainees reported high employer breach of obligations (mean score  $\geq 96$ ), while two apprentices and one trainee reported high breach of training obligations (mean score  $\geq 88$ ).

There were few similarities amongst the seven employees who reported high breach of employer or training obligations, the exception being they were all aged 30 years or older and either extremely committed ( $n = 5$ ) or somewhat committed ( $n = 2$ ) to a long-term career in the industry of their apprenticeship/traineeship.

The apprentice who reported high employer breach of obligations was male and worked in a small town for a multi-site company. This apprentice indicated that he had spent the last two years working towards a Certificate III qualification in the automotive industry. Of the three trainees who experienced high employer breach of obligations two were male and one was female. One trainee was aged 25 to 44 years and the other two apprentices were older than 44 years. Three trainees were undertaking a Certificate III or IV qualification in retail and hospitality, government administration and mining industries. Two of the trainees worked in a medium single site company while the third worked for a multi-site company.

Of the three employees who reported high breach of training obligations, two were male and one was female. Two of the employees were working towards a Certificate III qualification in the building and construction industry. The third employee was from the farming, forestry and fishing industry but did not indicate the qualification he was working towards. The two apprentices worked for small single-site companies in regional cities, while the trainee worked for a multi-site company located in a capital city.

## 2. Employers

Using the same method as previously described for employees, overall breach and fulfilment scores for direct employers of apprentices and trainees were also calculated. There were no employers who reported high breach of employee obligations (mean score  $\geq 128$ ) or training obligations (mean score  $\geq 88$ )

. Approximately half of all employers (49% of employers of apprentices and 53% of employers of trainees) reported low breach of employee obligations (mean score  $\leq 32$ ), and 64% of employers of apprentices and 63% of employers of trainees reported low breach of training obligations (mean score  $\leq 22$ ). Consistent with the pattern found among employees, no employers reported low fulfilment of employer obligations (mean score  $\leq 24$ ), while the majority (71% employers of apprentices; 70% employers of trainees) reported fulfilling their obligations to a high level (mean score  $\geq 96$ ).

## Recruitment strategies used by employers

Direct and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees were asked about the recruitment strategies their company used to select and recruit apprentices and trainees. Interviews were cited as the most frequently used recruitment strategy by 80% of all employers, followed by a probation period (67%). Use of a probation period as a recruitment strategy differed among employer groups, with it being used most often by direct and GTO employers of apprentices (72%) and least often by GTO employers of trainees (53%). Thirty-two percent of direct and GTO employers of apprentices used pre-apprenticeship courses as a means of recruiting apprentices. GTO employers additionally reported using application forms (94% GTO employers of apprentices; 100% GTO employers of trainees) and literacy and numeracy tests (76% GTO employers of apprentices; 92% GTO employers of trainees). GTO employers of apprentices also used aptitude tests (82%). Recruitment strategies used least often by all employer groups were use of a selection centre (6%), an unpaid trial (6%) and pre-employment medical tests (8%).

## Literacy/Numeracy Comparisons

Employee and employer respondents were each asked about their expectations and perceived experiences of the literacy and numeracy demands of the apprenticeship/traineeship.

### 1. Employees

Table 41 shows differences between direct and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding literacy and numeracy demands associated with the apprenticeship/traineeship. The items relate to the demands of the actual contract, the expected and perceived actual demands of the training, and the expected and perceived actual demands of the daily work.

Direct employed apprentices experienced slightly more difficulty reading their apprenticeship contract, compared with direct employed trainees; while trainees experienced slightly more difficulty understanding their traineeship contract. Among GTO employed apprentices and trainees, apprentices experienced greater difficulty reading and understanding their apprenticeship contract compared with trainees. However, none of these differences were significant.

Direct employed apprentices expected and found greater difficulty both in their training and daily work with regard to numeracy compared with literacy demands. In general, direct employed trainees expected and found greater difficulty with literacy compared with numeracy. The differences in expected and perceived actual numeracy demands of training and expected numeracy demands of daily work between direct employed apprentices and trainees were significant. In each instance, apprentices expected and experienced greater difficulty with numeracy demands compared with trainees.

GTO employed apprentices and trainees perceived experiencing less difficulty with literacy and numeracy demands of training than they expected. Both groups expected and found greater difficulty with the numeracy compared with literacy demands of daily work. Overall, GTO employed apprentices expected and experienced a greater difficulty with literacy and numeracy demands of training and daily work compared with GTO employed trainees. Only the differences

between groups in the expected and experienced difficulty with numeracy demands of training were significant.

## 2. Employers

Table 42 shows differences between direct and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding expectations of the literacy and numeracy demands placed on their apprentices/trainees. The items relate to the employers' views of demands of the actual contract, the employers' views of their apprentices'/trainees' expectations, and experience, of the demands of the training, and the employers' views of their apprentices'/trainees' expectations, and experience, of the demands of the daily work.

In general, direct and GTO employers of apprentices expected their apprentices to expect and experience greater difficulty in literacy and numeracy demands than direct and GTO employers of trainees did. Only the difference in expected difficulty with numeracy demands of training, between GTO employers of apprentices and trainees, was significant. In contrast with employers of apprentices, both direct and GTO employers of trainees expected their trainees to experience greater difficulty with literacy demands of training and daily work. However these differences were not significant.

**Table 41: Means, standard deviations and independent groups t-tests examining differences between direct and GTO employed apprentices and trainees regarding literacy and numeracy expectations and perceived actual difficulty**

Item	Direct Employed						GTO Employed					
	Apprentices		Trainees		Group Differences Statistics		Apprentices		Trainees		Group Differences Statistics	
	M	SD	M	SD	t-test	p	M	SD	M	SD	t-test	p
Difficulty reading contract	1.80a	1.06	1.78b	1.11	0.13	.897	1.81c	0.91	1.63d	1.00	1.02	.308
Difficulty understanding contract	1.88a	1.04	1.90b	1.03	-0.12	.907	1.95c	0.96	1.67d	0.96	1.55	.123
How difficult expect training to be in terms of reading and writing	2.06	1.12	2.14	1.51	-0.50	.620	2.16	1.05	2.00	1.04	0.83	.405
How difficult expect training to be in terms of maths and calculations	2.51	1.24	2.00	1.18	2.96	.003*	2.58	1.17	2.08	1.15	2.36	.019*
How difficult found training to be in terms of reading and writing	1.78	1.06	1.70	0.95	0.52	.602	1.89	0.98	1.82	0.93	0.42	.678
How difficult found training to be in terms of maths and calculations	2.00	1.01	1.61	0.92	2.79	.006*	2.26	1.09	1.55	0.79	4.42	.000*
How difficult expect daily work to be in terms of reading and writing	1.76	0.96	1.66	0.91	0.73	.464	1.90	0.96	2.00	1.04	-0.57	.567
How difficult expect daily work to be in terms of maths and calculations	2.09	1.08	1.78	0.99	2.06	.041*	2.27	1.05	2.11	1.11	0.85	.394
How difficult found daily work to be in terms of reading and writing	1.58	0.91	1.64	1.01	-0.45	.652	1.75	0.85	1.63	0.88	0.77	.444
How difficult found daily work to be in terms of maths and calculations	1.78	1.03	1.62	0.99	1.10	.271	1.97	0.94	1.68	0.96	1.66	.099

Notes: a 14 (10%) direct employed apprentices indicated they did not read their apprenticeship contract prior to commencing their apprenticeship; b6 (7%) direct employed trainees indicated they did not read their traineeship contract prior to commencing their traineeship; c 15 (11%) GTO employed apprentices did not read their apprenticeship contract; d 4 (10%) GTO employed trainees indicated they did not read their traineeship contract; Item response range: 1 (not at all difficult) to 5 (extremely difficult); \* p < .05.

**Table 42: Means, standard deviations and independent groups t-tests examining differences between direct and GTO employers of apprentices and trainees regarding expectations and perceived difficulty of literacy and numeracy**

Item	Direct Employers						GTO Employers					
	ERs of Apprentices		ERs of Trainees		Group Differences Statistics		ERs of Apprentices		ERs of Trainees		Group Differences Statistics	
	M	SD	M	SD	t-test	p	M	SD	M	SD	t-test	p
Difficulty reading contract	2.29a	1.14	2.16b	1.11	0.77	.440	2.71c	0.91	2.50d	0.53	0.66	.513
Difficulty understanding contract	2.37a	1.11	2.30b	1.15	0.38	.707	2.92c	0.76	2.70d	0.82	0.67	.508
How difficult expect training to be in terms of reading and writing	2.52	0.90	2.49	1.00	0.29	.774	2.71	0.85	2.69	0.63	0.05	.962
How difficult expect training to be in terms of maths and calculations	2.69	1.02	2.51	1.13	1.32	.188	3.24	0.56	2.69	0.63	2.49	.019*
How difficult found training to be in terms of reading and writing	2.56	0.96	2.59	1.11	-0.27	.787	2.76	0.97	2.85	0.69	-0.26	.799
How difficult found training to be in terms of maths and calculations	2.81	1.09	2.56	1.09	1.72	.086	3.24	0.66	2.92	0.49	1.42	.167
How difficult expect daily work to be in terms of reading and writing	2.23	0.98	2.17	0.98	0.45	.651	2.41	0.71	2.38	0.65	0.11	.915
How difficult expect daily work to be in terms of maths and calculations	2.35	1.00	2.24	1.00	0.83	.406	2.71	0.59	2.31	0.75	1.63	.114
How difficult found daily work to be in terms of reading and writing	2.39	0.99	2.40	1.09	00.11	.915	2.71	0.92	2.77	0.72	-0.20	.840
How difficult found daily work to be in terms of maths and calculations	2.57	0.97	2.43	1.08	1.02	.306	3.12	0.70	2.77	0.60	1.44	.161

Notes: a 17 (10%) direct employers of apprentices indicated that apprentices employed through their company did not read their apprenticeship contract and a further 42 (25%) did not know whether or not apprentices read their contract upon commencement of their apprenticeship; b 8 (9%) direct employers of trainees indicated that trainees employed through their company did not read their traineeship contract and 26 (28%) did not know whether or not trainees read their traineeship contract upon commencement of their traineeship; c 4 (23%) GTO employers of apprentices indicated that apprentices employed through their company did not read their apprenticeship contract and 11 (65%) did not know whether or not apprentices read their apprenticeship contract; 2 (15%) GTO employers of trainees stated their trainees did not read their traineeship contract and 9 (69%) did not know whether or not their trainees read their traineeship contract; Item response range: 1 (not at all difficult) to 5 (extremely difficult); \* p < .05.

## Consequences of breach

The employers, but not the employees, were asked in qualitative questions about what would happen if obligations on either side were not met. There were a considerable number of responses to these questions. If the employer obligations were not met, employers generally said that the apprentice or trainee might leave, lose motivation, and the company would be less productive. A smaller number of employers were rather harsh in their response, for example 'Some apprentices don't like many parts of the job, just as the tradesmen don't, but it needs to be done whether they like the work or not.' Many employers said that if the apprentice/trainee did not fulfil their obligations, warnings and then dismissal would follow. Employers of trainees appeared slightly more willing than those of apprentices to try to uncover the problem and address it. One employer of trainees said *Often they are just trainees and their commitment varies as a result of peer pressure - some rise to the top, others float and some are on life jackets - but we help them all.*

With relation to the consequence of training breaches, several employers expressed concern about poor input from the RTO in training and/or assessment.; for example, 'can never contact the person at the RTO', 'we have cancelled the traineeship due to the lack of any RTO assistance ... we have had no support from XXX (TAFE) ... we made a decision to pay for private courses for our employee.' The consequences of breach of training obligations were variously described as 'unhappy trainee', 'the company would suffer', 'workplace injuries and non-competent workers'. GTO employers had additional worries; several mentioned 'unhappy host' or 'loss of host' as a possible consequence of breach of the psychological contract.



# Appendix 4: Case study interview protocols

Note: For GTOs there is an additional layer of interviews, at the head office. GTO case studies include two host employer visits.

## Case study interviews

### *Senior manager/HR manager/ training manager/apprenticeship or traineeship co-ordinator*

Background about the organisation- size, function, history of apprenticeships/traineeships.

What is your role within the organisation?

What is your role in the organisation with respect to apprenticeships/traineeships?

How many apprentices/trainees does your organisation employ?

Can you tell us about any literacy/numeracy issues that they have? - in relation to their training; in relation to their work? - at the beginning; as the apprenticeship/traineeship develops?

Can you tell us a bit about the pay rates of your apprentices/trainees? Do you think the rate of pay affect their commitment to the organisation? In what ways?

What do you perceive as the most important obligations your organisation has to its apprentices/trainees? Who is responsible for 'delivering' on the company's obligations?

What do you perceive as the most important obligations your apprentices/trainees have to your organisation?

What do you think the basis of this set of expectations is? How are they arrived at?

Are these expectations made clear to all parties, in what ways and by whom?

What can make it hard for you (the company) to fulfil your side of the contract?

How do apprentices/trainees learn about the company's expectations, and vice versa?

Do expectations change or develop over the course of an apprenticeship/traineeship? How and why? Can you give me some examples?

What are the roles, in developing expectations about apprenticeships/traineeships, of other players? (Prompt: parents and schools (for young people), the media, AAC, peers, )

Can you provide an example of where you believe your organisation has exceeded the expectations of an apprentice/ trainee or apprentices/trainees in general?

Can you provide an example of where you believe your organisation fell short of the expectations of an apprentice/ trainee or apprentices/ trainees in general?

Can you provide an example of where you believe an apprentice/ trainee exceeded the expectations of your organisation?

Can you provide an example of where you believe an apprentice/ trainee fell short of the expectations of your organisation?

What happens when your organisation exceeds the expectations of apprentices/ trainees? Have you heard of examples from other organisations?

What happens when your organisation falls short of the expectations of apprentices/trainees? Have you heard of examples from other organisations?

What happens when apprentices/trainees exceed the expectations of your organisation? Have you heard of examples from other organisations?

What happens when apprentices/trainees fall short of the expectations of your organisation?  
Have you heard of examples from other organisations?

How big a role do you think is played by mutual expectations between the training provider and the apprentice/trainee? Other players? (Prompt: parents, GTO, AAC)

If you have had apprentices and trainees who have wanted to quit, what do you do to try to retain them (if appropriate)?

How do you think mutual expectations can be made clearer?

### *Supervisor*

What is your role within the organisation?

What is your role in the organisation with respect to apprenticeships/traineeships?

Can you tell anything about the pay rates of your apprentices/trainees? Do you think the rate of pay affects their commitment to the organisation? In what ways?

Can you tell us about any literacy/numeracy issues that they have? - in relation to their training; in relation to their work? - at the beginning; as the apprenticeship/traineeship develops?

What do you perceive as the most important obligations your organisation has to its apprentices/trainees?

What do you perceive as the most important obligations your apprentices/trainees have to your organisation?

What do you think the basis of this set of expectations is? How are they arrived at?

Are these expectations made clear to all parties, in what ways and by whom?

How do apprentices/trainees learn about the company's expectations, and vice versa?

Do expectations change or develop over the course of an apprenticeship/traineeship? How and why? Can you give me some examples?

What are the roles, in developing expectations about apprenticeships/traineeships, of other players? (Prompt: parents and schools (for young people), the media, AAC, peers, )

Can you provide an example of where you believe your organisation has exceeded the expectations of an apprentice/ trainee or apprentices/trainees in general? Have you heard of examples from other organisations?

Can you provide an example of where you believe your organisation fell short of the expectations of an apprentice/ trainee or apprentices/trainees in general?

Can you provide an example of where you believe an apprentice/trainee exceeded the expectations of your organisation?

Can you provide an example of where you believe an apprentice/trainee fell short of the expectations of your organisation?

What happens when your organisation exceeds the expectations of apprentices/trainees? Have you heard of examples from other organisations?

What happens when your organisation falls short of the expectations of apprentices/trainees? Have you heard of examples from other organisations?

What happens when apprentices/trainees exceed the expectations of your organisation? Have you heard of examples from other organisations?

What happens when apprentices/trainees s fall short of the expectations of your organisation? Have you heard of examples from other organisations?

How big a role do you think is played by mutual expectations between the training provider and the apprentice/trainee? Other players? (Prompt: parents, AAC) Have you heard of examples from other organisations?

If you have had apprentices and trainees who have wanted to quit, what do you do to try to retain them (if appropriate)?

How do you think mutual expectations can be made clearer?

## *RTO*

What is your role within the RTO?

What is your role within the RTO with respect to apprenticeships/traineeships?

Thinking about apprentices and trainees from X and Y host employers . . .

How many apprentices and trainees from those companies have you encountered?

Can you tell us about any literacy/numeracy issues that they have? - in relation to their training; in relation to their work (as reported by employers or apprentices/trainees)? - at the beginning; as the apprenticeship/traineeship develops?

What do you perceive as the most important obligations which your training organisation has to its apprentices/trainees?

What do you perceive as the most important obligations which apprentices/trainees have to this training organisation?

What do you think the basis of this set of expectations is? How are they arrived at?

Are these expectations made clear to all parties, in what ways and by whom?

How do you learn about the expectations of the apprentices/trainees? How do the apprentices/trainees learn about your expectations of them?

Do expectations change or develop over the course of an apprenticeship/traineeship? How and why? Can you give me some examples?

What are the roles, in developing expectations about apprenticeships/traineeships, of other players? (Prompt: parents and schools (for young people), the media, AAC, peers, )

Can you provide an example of where you believe your RTO has exceeded the expectations of an apprentice/ trainee or apprentices/trainees in general?

Can you provide an example of where you believe your RTO fell short of the expectations of an apprentice/ trainee or apprentices/trainees in general?

Can you provide an example of where you believe an apprentice/trainee exceeded the expectations of your RTO?

Can you provide an example of where you believe an apprentice/trainee fell short of the expectations of your RTO?

What happens when your RTO exceeds the expectations of apprentices/trainees? Have you heard of examples from other RTOs?

What happens when your RTO falls short of the expectations of apprentices/trainees? Have you heard of examples from other RTOs?

What happens when apprentices/trainees exceed the expectations of your RTO? Have you heard of examples from other RTOs?

What happens when apprentices/trainees fall short of the expectations of your RTO? Have you heard of examples from other RTOs?

Is there anything you'd like to say about what you have heard about mutual expectations between the employer and the apprentice/trainee? Relatively, how big a role do you think is played by the mutual expectations between the RTO and the apprentice/trainee, and those between the employer and the apprentice/trainee? Other players? (Prompt: parents, AAC).

If you have had apprentices and trainees who have wanted to quit their apprenticeship/traineeship, what do you do to try to retain them (if appropriate)?

How do you think mutual expectations can be made clearer?

## *Apprentices/Trainees*

How long have you been doing your apprenticeship/traineeship for? How are you undertaking your training? Age? Previous employment history? Reason for doing apprenticeship/traineeship? Any previous apprenticeship/traineeship/further education?

How much did you expect to like the job? (on a scale 1 to 10). How much do you like the job? (on a scale 1 to 10)

What's the best thing and the worst thing about your apprenticeship/traineeship so far?

Do you know whether you and other apprentices/trainees are paid any more than the minimum requirement? Does your rate of pay affect your commitment to the organisation?

Can you tell us about any literacy and numeracy challenges you or others have come across at work or in the training? at the beginning; as the apprenticeship/traineeship develops?

What do you see as the most important obligations the organisation has to you?

What do you see as the most important obligations you have to the organisation?

What do you think are the bases of this set of expectations is? How are they arrived at? What are the roles, in developing your expectations about your apprenticeship/traineeship, of other players? (Prompt: parents and schools (for young people), the media, AAC, peers, )

Are these expectations made clear to everybody you deal with, in what ways do you think they are made clear (or not made clear) and by whom?

How did you learn about the expectations? How did your employer/RTO learn about your expectations?

Do your expectations, or those of your employer change or develop over the course of an apprenticeship/traineeship? How and why? Can you give me some examples?

Now let's look at the expectations and obligations between yourself and the RTO . . .

How much did you expect to like the training? (on a scale 1 to 10). How much do you like the training? (on a scale 1 to 10)

What do you see as the most important obligations the RTO has to you?

What do you see as the most important obligations you have to the RTO?

What do you think the basis of this set of expectations is? How are they arrived at? What are the roles, in developing your expectations about your apprenticeship/traineeship training, of other players? (Prompt: parents and schools (for young people), the media, AAC, peers, )

Are these expectations made clear to everybody you deal with at the RTO, in what ways do you think they are made clear (or not made clear) and by whom?

Have your expectations, or those of your RTO, changed or developed over the course of your apprenticeship/traineeship? How and why? Can you give me some examples? How important are the nature of individual teachers/trainers to you?

Can you provide an example of where the organisation or the RTO has exceeded your expectations or those of apprentices/trainees in general?

Can you provide an example of where you believe the organisation or the RTO fell short of your expectations or those of apprentices/trainees in general?

Can you provide an example of where you believe you have exceeded the expectations of the organisation or RTO?

Can you provide an example of where you believe you fell short of the expectations of the organisation or RTO?

What happens when the organisation or RTO exceeds your expectations? Have you heard of examples from other organisations or RTOs?

What happens when the organisation or RTO falls short of your expectations? Have you heard of examples from other organisations or RTOs?

What happens when you exceed the expectations of the organisation or RTO? Have you heard of examples from other organisations or RTOs?

What happens when you fall short of the expectations of the organisation or RTO? Have you heard of examples from other organisations or RTOs?

How big a role in your satisfaction (or that of other apprentices/trainees) do you think is played by mutual expectations between the employer and yourself compared with those between

the RTO and yourself? Other players? (Prompt: parents, AAC) Have you heard of examples from other organisations?

Have you ever considered quitting? Why was that? What made you decide to stay?

How do you think mutual expectations can be made clearer?

# Appendix 5: Case study reports

## Case study - ElectroGTO

### Introduction and overview of apprenticeship and traineeship programs

This case study was carried out in ElectroGTO, a GTO in an inner-city suburb in Melbourne. ElectroGTO also operated an RTO, offering apprentice and pre-apprentice training and short courses for the electrical industry, and a labour hire company. Its apprentice operations had been in place for some time and its move into traineeships was relatively recent. The GTO had also moved into other trades - plumbing and mechanical engineering - to spread its business risk, as the electrical industry, which was traditionally the basis for its business, was highly vulnerable to economic cycles. ElectroGTO also had a division in Tasmania.

ElectroGTO had 549 apprentices and trainees at the time of the visit. Formerly there had been over 430 apprentices, but the apprentice numbers were now 350, with 199 trainees. The CEO said that a reduction over the past few years was due to various circumstances which led many employers in their industry to use a directly-employed apprentice workforce, supplementing with GTO apprentices as a top-up. Perhaps for this reason, and because of the nature of the industries in which they worked, ElectroGTO's apprentices moved among a number of host employers more than is the norm nowadays for GTOs. The CEO noted that an apprentice was likely to have between 2-3 and 15-20 host employers. Trainees, on the other hand, generally stayed with one host employer. Most of the apprentice host employers worked on very big construction projects; for example one recent major project had used 60 of ElectroGTO's apprentices at one point. There were three field officers in traineeships and six in apprenticeships; the two areas operated as separate business units. The traineeship field officer who was interviewed had a case load of 75 trainees. There were a number of school-based trainees, in business, IT, sport and recreation and children's services. Full-time trainees were mainly in business, IT and management.

### Research method

Most of the interviews took place over one day in August 2010 at the GTO's offices. The apprentice was accessed at that site as he was attending the RTO for training. Two participants - the trainee and the trainee's host employer - were interviewed by phone. The apprentice's host employer was unable to be accessed. No interview was carried out with an RTO; a staff member from the ElectroGTO RTO had already been interviewed for the project as the RTO serviced another of the project case studies, and declined to be interviewed again.

Interviews took between 23 and 50 minutes, with the majority lasting over 35 minutes. A detailed interview protocol was utilised, in common with the other case studies. The interviews were taped, with permission, and transcribed, and then analysed to draw out themes.

**Table 1: Interviews: ElectroGTO**

Interview Number	Job title	Organisation/Location	Gender	Age	Approx length of time with company
1	CEO	ElectroGTO Group	M	-	15 years
2	Acting traineeship manager & corporate strategic manager	ElectroGTO	F	-	Not provided
3	Traineeship field officer	ElectroGTO	M	-	1 year
6	Apprentice	Current host employer: commercial electrical subcontractor	M	32	Just over 1 year; also undertook pre-apprenticeship at ElectroGTO
5	Trainee's workplace supervisor	Host employer: A university	F	-	-
4	Trainee, Cert III and Cert IV in business	Only host employer: A university	F	22	Just over 1 year

## Findings

### *What are the promises in the psychological contract?*

This section deals primarily with the contract between the host employer and the apprentice or trainee. It is recognised that the legal employer is the GTO but nevertheless the day to day employer is the host.

The following apprentice/trainee expectations of the employer were noted by the GTO staff.

Employment-related:

- to be treated fairly,
- to be treated with respect,
- to receive a good rate of pay at the end of the term,
- to work in a safe environment,
- to be in a supportive workplace,
- to have a good career outcome,
- to work for someone that is investing in him/her for long term reasons,
- to be employed by someone with an understanding that the trainee or apprentice does not have many skills when they are new,
- to work in a good physical environment,
- to have a designated supervisor, and
- to be in a workplace where there are correct protocols and procedures.

Training- and learning-related:

- to undergo a rigorous training,
- to get a wide range of training,
- to be given the opportunity and time to learn,
- to develop technical skills and professional attitude skills, and
- to receive a qualification.

The trainee host employer thought that the trainee's expectations of a host employer were:

- to equip them with work ready skills,
- to give them a good range of experience,
- to keep them within the organisation if possible at the end of the traineeship, and
- to be honest about any shortcomings.

The trainee's and apprentice's expectations of the employer were as follows:

- To help the trainee/apprentice to get a qualification,

- To provide working experience, and
- To provide a steady job.

The following employer expectations of the apprentice and trainee were noted. The GTO staff thought that trainees and apprentices should turn up on time; be enthusiastic; be prepared to listen and follow instructions; work safely; and become progressively more skilled. The trainee host employer expected them to adhere to policies and procedures, contribute to the working team, as a junior member of staff, help others do their work; attend regularly. The trainee thought she was expected to finish the program, have a good work ethic, and 'be part of the office.' The trainee and apprentice thought that they were expected to subsist on a low wage while in training and did not resent this.

The CEO thought that it was more difficult conveying realistic expectations to employers of trainees as compared to employers of apprentices. The employers of trainees did not have benchmarks to use when thinking about what to expect from their trainees.

I think most of the guys who employ apprentices were apprentices themselves. Tradies tend to employ apprentices so they - some of them when you talk to them say, remember when you were a first year? They go, yeah, I mucked about too. Because when they play up they'll say, yeah, I was a bit of a wily young lad too. We can always put that back to them, and then we'll go, you know, you were given a fair crack. You can talk on that level. But sometimes the trainees, because you're going in the corporate environment, there's not quite the same. You're getting people from a - you know an HR manager with a degree background. It's not the same as two tradies talking together. It's different.

As well as the employment-related expectations, there were also a set of expectations between the trainee/apprentice and the RTO. As it was not possible to access an RTO only the trainee/apprentice expectations can be reported upon. The trainee said that she was expecting more face to face classes and was disappointed that there were not any. She also expected the progress through the certificate to be clearer and found it somewhat confusing. She got the impression that the trainers were stressed and under-resourced. The trainee however felt that the GTO was much more important to her traineeships than the RTO, and both far less important than the host, and so she thought this did not matter very much. The apprentice felt that he expected the RTO trainers to 'give us the benefit of their experience and try to get across the material as clearly and concisely as possible' He found the training a little slow and repetitive but said that this may have been because he had covered a lot of the physics and maths at high school, whereas many of the apprentices had not. He differentiated between the teachers who had been teacher-trained and those who were just 'ex-electricians... biding their time until they retire.' His responsibility as a learner was to

turn up, participate, and always try my hardest to get a good mark and to understand the material that we're going through.

### *How is the psychological contract developed within the workplace, for all parties?*

The development of the contract began before employment; ElectroGTO devoted considerable resources to working with school careers advisers and, to a lesser extent, job networks. Parents could also influence what an apprentice or trainee expected of the employment relationship. A lengthy induction program was provided, both for apprentices and trainees. The apprentices and trainees had a three-day induction at the GTO which included a discussion about the respective responsibilities of the GTO and the host. The major emphasis of the induction was on safety and the apprentices were instructed to ring the field officer if they felt unsafe at work and if they couldn't reach the field office, to ring the CEO. As the field officer said, 'it's in one ear and out the other', so the induction was regularly reinforced in interactions between field officers and apprentices/trainees. Each apprentice/trainee also had a workplace induction. At the trainee host workplace, for example, the trainees had the same induction as regular employees and the same work planning processes.

The field officer felt that the importance of the qualification was developed over the course of the traineeship. Initially the trainees were focused on the job, 'because you're working with your supervisors and your other team members day to day.' But eventually they came to realise that it was important to gain the qualification as well especially as they moved off training wages onto normal wages when that was achieved.

The trainee and apprentice both felt that the expectations were made quite clear at the beginning of their contracts. In the case of the trainee, the extensive interview process enabled her to understand both what ElectroGTO expected and what the host employer expected. The apprentice had developed his expectations partly through the knowledge of the industry gained during his pre-apprenticeship. He expected to be working in the commercial sector and therefore to move from one host to another



because he realised that commercial work involved big projects completed to short time-frames. It should be noted that the apprentice had extensive working experience in what might be considered 'higher-level' work as an industrial designer and had also lived overseas, and therefore could have had a more sophisticated understanding of the labour market than many apprentices. Both were asked about how much they had expected to enjoy the job out of 10 and how much they did enjoy it. For the trainee, her expectation was 8 and the reality was 8; the apprentice the expectation was 3 or 4 and the reality was 8 or 9 with one previous host, but 5 or 6 with the present.

According to the traineeship manager, expectations of an apprenticeship were clearer than those of a traineeship, although the gap was narrowing. The trainee host employer interviewed confirmed the difference between expectations around traineeships and around apprenticeships:

You see them advertised on the telly or whatever. You just think, oh it's like some - this was my first notion as well - slave labour. That was exactly what I used to think of it as, what it was. Now that we actually are involved in it, I see it's much bigger. There's much more to it than that obviously. It would have been negative, definitely yes, when I first heard of them, yes.

When asked by the interviewer whether she had the same impression of apprenticeships, the host said

No, that's the interesting thing, because I mean an apprenticeship I suppose - there's a whole different mindset I think about apprenticeships because it's just, it's understood that you do the time, you get the skills, but then you've got great opportunities afterwards to go and work in that chosen field. So there is a completely different mindset I think between a traineeship and an apprenticeship and they're not seen as the same.... I mean I suppose you hear more about apprenticeships than maybe traineeships. I sense people don't really know what a traineeship really is.

However, having participated in the program she now had quite a different view.

An important way of developing expectations was the service agreement between the GTO and the host employer, which included a range of issues about supervision, OH&S and relevant codes, Beyond the written service agreement was an expectation that the apprentices would not just be used, as the CEO put it, as 'cannon fodder... it's one of the things we have to constantly battle with.' The service agreement was a legal document and the CEO said:

Sometimes we lose work because it's quite prescriptive. Some of our competitors aren't quite as prescriptive and we've had lawyers say to us, you must have this. Things like public liability insurance, all the insurances there and also the whole thing about dual responsibility and safety, absolutely paramount because if an apprentice gets hurt on the job in a group training environment both the hosts and us will be held responsible. So you don't just wash your hands when you place them with a host.

If a host was a small company that did not have proper processes and documentation in place, the GTO would actually work with them to help them prepare to the minimum standard. However in some cases the GTO might decline the host. As the traineeship manager said

(The field officer) and I have a lot of conversations about different things but one of them is we say to ourselves: Would we like to be placed at that host? It's a really good evaluation to say and if we wouldn't like to be there, then we wouldn't place one of our trainees there. We want to make sure of our obligation that they are at a host where they could get the best out of the learning.

### *What impacts do RTOs, intermediary organisations and other stakeholders have on the construction of the psychological contract?*

The presence of a GTO added strengths and also extra complexities. The strength was essentially that both parties to the 'normal' contract (ie between the apprentice/trainee and the host employer) received extra support and education about the nature of the psychological contract and the contract was thus strengthened. Moreover, help was available through counselling on either side and/or mediation where the contract seemed to be failing or had been breached.

The presence of a GTO also added another set of expectations to the contract - the expectations of apprentices/trainees and host of the GTO itself. According to the CEO the apprentices looked to ElectroGTO to make sure they were trained properly and got a wide range of experiences. The field officer said that the apprentices and trainees expected the GTO to provide support and information about pay rates, entitlements and employment relationships. They wanted someone who was well-

informed - that could answer their questions promptly, that was 'supportive and caring and also understand what it's like to do a traineeship.' They wanted face to face interaction not just telephone contact. The GTO expected the apprentices and trainees to present well, to behave appropriately in their workplaces, to complete their training by taking the three hours a week allocated training time and completing their assignments. The trainee said that her obligation to the GTO was as follows:

Just being a model employee, I guess, because as it is I am employed by them, so just upholding their name.

ElectroGTO had made particular efforts to strengthen the bond between the apprentice/trainee and the GTO. From the recruitment process onwards, the GTO staff made a point of showing a keen interest in the applicant particularly as many were school-leavers embarking on their full-time working lives. The field officer noted that the awareness of Group Training was high among young people but less well understood by hosts.

There were extra expectations between the 'employing' parties, with, for example, the service agreement discussed in the previous section. The trainee host employer said that her expectation of employing through a GTO was that would save having to engage with the bureaucracy of her organisation (a university) to have the trainee on the books, and also that the GTO would act as a third party to assist if the relationship broke down.

The GTO also had service agreements with the RTOs that it used. Not all of the apprentices could be accommodated within ElectroGTO's own RTO and so a number of TAFEs were utilised. The trainees were sent to a limited number of approved RTOs; the number had been limited recently. The main issue causing difficulties with RTOs, including TAFE, was reported to be that some did not report very well; transcripts were not made available; the RTO did not inform the GTO of problems such as poor behaviour or absenteeism; and, for trainees (who were mainly on-the-job trainees), the RTO did not ensure progression through the required learning modules. The service agreements with external RTOs specified such issues but were not legally binding like the agreements with the host companies. However, ElectroGTO seemed to be fairly firm about being in control of the relationship with the RTOs. The field officer said

It's not so much what our expectation is, it's about explaining and guiding them as to what our expectations are and they need to deliver it.

There was also a relationship between the host and the RTO. The host employer felt that the formal training component of the traineeship was important; she thought the RTO was 'the medium that's going to be providing the qualifications'. Her view was that the GTO was 'hovering in the background' and that the RTO was actually more important because the RTO was more visible:

We have the assessor who comes from XXX Business School, sits down with [the trainee] and myself and we go through the stuff and all that sort of thing

The role of the field officer was central to the smooth day-to-day working of the relationships among the parties. As the traineeship field officer said,

On a weekly basis we deal with - well I deal with promoting the traineeship model to businesses. I talk to job seekers, I deal with HR issues in the workplace, I deal with pay issues, enquiries. I look at employment contracts, I deal with - I manage 75 trainees at the moment and apprentices. I deal with all their, at times, personal issues that do arise. Whether it's they're kicked out of home or they've got a relationship issue or they need some guidance on - for example I've had an apprentice ask me where to take a girl on a Friday night. So you know you're a career coach as well so you're quite often providing tips and information on how they can better themselves as a young professional. But as a young person, becoming an adult. So you're often giving life guidance .... There's a lot more to it that we do encounter with and that's just I guess the trainee side of things. We deal with employers as well. They bombard questions around charges, entitlements, issues they've got with trainees and how to better performance manage them. How to counsel them, how to get the best out of them. Then there's also the training so it's managing training,

it's coordinating it, it's making sure they're doing it and attending. It's quite a large job description.

This field officer felt that the job title was a bit 'old school'. In his view an effective field officer could keep trainees motivated to completion, sell the program to businesses, and believe in the program. The field officer also carried out a great deal of work with schools, individually and collectively eg through careers expos.

The introduction of a GTO into the employment relationship could cause some confusion for the trainees and apprentices. A question was posed to the participants about who they thought the trainees and apprentices viewed as their primary employer. According to the traineeship field officer, when a group training apprenticeship or traineeship was going well, it was the host employer. He saw this as desirable partly because the field officer's job was to support the host as well as the employee and therefore to some extent they could not be seen as too much on the employees' side.

He also saw it as desirable because 'the ultimate aim of a traineeship is for them to complete and move on and up within that company.' Certainly for the trainee, she felt as though she worked for her host, even though she knew that formally ElectroGTO was the employer.

They're the main support, they're there every day, I have heaps of people to ask if I have questions, lots of people to help me out and teach me things

However for the apprentice, the reverse was true:

I don't really see the host employer as my employer. I see [ElectroGTO] as my employer and the host employers as a temporary placement because I never know how long I'm going to be there. I kind of like that, actually.

Parents were also stakeholders, where the trainee/apprentice was young, and would sometimes contact the GTO for advice or information.

### *What helps all parties fulfil their side of the psychological contract and what prevents it?*

The expertise of the staff who worked for the GTO seemed an important factor in helping the various parties to the psychological contract fulfil their side of the contract. Not only had the GTO staff that were interviewed undertaken either an apprenticeship or traineeship themselves, the two more junior staff interviewed had had experience previously with other GTOs and also other related organisations. They knew the business inside out and it was apparent that they would be able to speak to all stakeholders including the apprentices and trainees with considerable authority. Familiarity of the host employer with the qualifications being undertaken also assisted; although the trainee host interviewed had not done a traineeship and did not know much about the traineeship system, she did have a VET qualification in the same areas as the trainee she was supervising (business administration and frontline management).

Field officers were often influential in helping parties fulfil their side of the contract by intervening, either when requested by either the employee or the host, or when they sensed difficulties developing. As the field officer said:

Quite often there's a lot of pivotal conversations that happen at a point in a traineeship or apprenticeship that makes that individual sit up and say hey that person's right. My field officer's right - I either need to knuckle down, or I need to move on, or I do need to focus a bit more. I do need to write things down that are instructed to me . Or I do need to speak to people properly. It's not a school ground anymore, I'm not out with my mates. A lot of these pivotal conversations happen with the field officer and the trainee. They shape the way that person operates in the workplace or the way they approach their role in that workplace. That goes on without the host employer sometimes knowing.

ElectroGTO had introduced a number of specific interventions to aid the fulfilment of the psychological contract. These included, for example, a document that the GTO went through with the host, a few months before completion. The document listed different options including retention into the company and progression to a higher qualification.

Meetings between host employers could help, so that people could swap ideas about dealing with trainees/apprentices; this happened at the host company which hosted several trainees from ElectroGTO. Such meetings provided, for example, reassurance about being able to supervise the study of their trainees: 'it can be a bit daunting because it's probably a long time since [some of the supervisors] ever had to do any schoolwork' according to the trainee host.

Inexperience made fulfilling the contract difficult. The host employer noted that with her first trainee she did not really know what to do and felt she had not been as effective as she should have been. It seems that perhaps field officer were not always as successful in providing support as they perceived.

A low number of working hours also presented difficulties: the trainee host employer noted that it was hard to do the right thing by a school-based trainee because the fact that they attending the workplace only once a week meant that it was hard to find meaningful work for them to do. It should be noted that this suggested that rather than filling a staffing need, the school-based trainee was surplus to requirements and employed for altruistic reasons rather than business reasons.

Some discussions between the GTO and hosts related to unrealistic benchmarks for what an apprentice might be able to do. ElectroGTO's CEO said:

If you send an apprentice out who's a third year and the host employer thinks he's only got the skill level of a first or second year you will get him sent straight back. We also ask the host to help us. If an apprentice is struggling sometimes it may not be his or her fault. They might have been working on data for maybe a year and they haven't had a lot of exposure, say, in the second year and his new host goes, he's a bit light on in their knowledge. You've got to explain to them the kid's been doing data for the last - it's not ideal ... but sometimes that's probably what's happened and can you ... cut him a bit of slack.

Sometimes the GTO might ask a host to take a poorly-performing apprentice at a discounted rate or even free of charge for a limited period, to try to evaluate and improve his performance; but in some high-pressure commercial construction projects the host would not be able to utilise a lower-performing apprentice. The apprentices did not know that that the discount was being applied, and so it did not form part of the mutual expectations.

While solving many problems, group training could also create new ones. According to the ElectroGTO CEO, under group training it was possible for an apprentice to 'fall through the cracks'.

When people [staff members] come here every day I can tell all of a sudden - I say, she doesn't look happy or he doesn't look happy. It's not being nosy; sometimes you just pick that up, a perception thing. But with apprentices, because you're not with them every day and you're relying on a third party to help train them and look after them that's very important that field officers have got a good working relationship with the host along with the apprentice.

The less direct relationship between the apprentice/trainee and the host could also create difficulties, particularly for the apprentices, who tended to have a number of hosts. Some host employers were said to treat their GTO apprentices the same as their directly-employed apprentices, but others did not. The CEO said that some apprentices might not put the same effort into building a relationship with each host as others did. The apprentice discussed the converse of this as follows:

I suppose I invest a fair bit of energy in ensuring that the relationship I have with [ElectroGTO] is a good one and probably less so with the host employers in that sense. I mean there's individuals that I know - the current company that I'm with I do have a direct relationship with the boss. But I don't have a relationship with the owner of the company. Same with the first site I was on - I think I spoke to the foreman of our company once, maybe twice... I suppose there's that

knowledge from my perspective that I'm not going to get to know all of them that well and at some point I will move on.

The apprentice accepted that these feelings were mutual, and that the host company would naturally give preference to its own apprentices before the GTO apprentices.

For the more introverted apprentices, the CEO said that moving around was difficult. Added to this, many of the jobs the apprentices worked on were in different locations as their companies got new contracts. This added an extra layer of uncertainty and constant change. The apprentice reported that the three hosts he had worked for were quite different in their quality standards and the demands they made on him as an apprentice.

My current employer, they're just a bit of a -for want of a better word - a bit of a dud firm. I'm not learning very much. They guys I'm working with, they just don't care very much they don't care about their work and they don't care about the quality of their work..... Whereas the guy I was working for before, because it was his company and he's a bit of a one man band he was like, go, go, go, go, go and on my back a little bit. Sometimes it was a little stressful but I'd say I developed more in that four months that I was with him than I have in the rest of the apprenticeship combined.... I like people who take pride in their work, regardless of what their work is.

This is quite an important point. Whatever the high standards of ElectroGTO, in the end the daily experience of work was provided by the host, and moving between hosts enabled unfavourable comparisons to be made among companies. However it did guard against spending the entire apprenticeship with a poor host.

The expectation of getting a permanent job at the end of the traineeship or apprenticeship was rather a sensitive issue. While it was reported that most host employers wanted to keep their trainees, some did not have permanent vacancies available. The CEO said that it should never be assumed that employers should be expected to employ their graduated apprentices as this was not an expectation that should be held:

It depends on your view of what you're trying to achieve. Sometimes it's training someone up to be a long-term employee, others saying we're just going to give the kids a go. It gives them a chance in life

At the trainee host company, a previous trainee had nurtured expectations of being employed after the end of the traineeship even though it had been made clear that no guarantee of employment could be given. In fact a job was eventually found elsewhere within the organisation. In a sense this seemed a case of a 'secret hope' rather than an unfulfilled expectation. It was interesting that the current trainee explained that she was aware that there was unlikely to be a permanent job within the section and that her awareness of this had been reinforced through team meetings about funding issues. The issue was not discussed so much in relation the apprentices presumably because firstly the apprentices moved around so much between hosts, and secondly because the demand for labour in the industry was so high.

### *What is the impact of a fulfilled versus a breached psychological contract?*

In the GTO environment, a fulfilled contract could be described as one where all parties were happy, the trainee/apprentice completed the training contract and achieved the relevant qualification, the trainee/apprentice went on to a further training contract or permanent employment with a host or elsewhere, and the host employer remained committed to working with the GTO.

One consequence of unfulfilled expectations could be that a trainee/apprentice considered terminating the contract. All of the 'employer' interviewees - GTO staff and hosts - said that if this became apparent, it would be imperative for all parties to sit down and discuss the problem. In the end though, all agreed that if the employee wished to leave it might sometimes be an appropriate

course of action. Another consequence of a serious breach on either side (employee and host) could be that the contract was suspended until the GTO could find the trainee/apprentice another host. The field officer had three out of 75 in this position at the time of the research.

In the specific instances in the case study, there was no evidence of any serious breaches. While the apprentice was disappointed in two of his host employers, his expectations of the job had not been very high in the first place. The trainee's expectations were high but had been met; she noted that she herself had not lived up to expectations in terms of her attendance at work. This was addressed by the host rather than the GTO and as the trainee had been taken on for a second contract at Certificate IV level, it can be assumed that the resolution was satisfactory.

### *How can mutual expectations be made clearer?*

A small number of suggestions were made, all relating to communication strategies. The field office suggested giving more attention to the correct staging of information giving, so that retention was better. He suggested that this should be done via casual chats between the two parties (the host and the apprentice/trainee) and should include explicit discussion of the expectations.

The host employer felt that expectations in her organisation were clear partly because as a major employer the university had very clear personnel procedures. She felt however that for other hosts it would be vital to educate them to make expectations clear from the outset. She felt that it was quite difficult, in addition, being open and communicative in all circumstances, and that some employers might find it difficult to talk openly to the trainee/apprentice if the latter were not fulfilling expectations. Her organisation had clear performance management procedures and perhaps other employers could be encouraged to do the same.

The trainee suggested that an open initial discussion between all parties would assist a great deal.

Probably just at the start to - for everybody to sit down together and really discuss it, what is expected of everybody and what everybody puts into it, what you're going to get out of it and how you're going to get that out of - certain things out of it. You know what I mean, just the big open discussion, I guess, about what's ahead. I think that would be the only way. I mean, that is done - it is spoken about but that would be the best way.

## Conclusion and key findings

In this case study it was apparent that the presence of a GTO had many advantages in ensuring both that expectations were made explicit and clear, and that expectations were met. The lengthy application and induction process ensured that apprentices and trainees were clear about what was expected of them. The field officers helped to 'rescue' situations where expectations on either side were not being met. The formal service agreements with the hosts ensured that hosts knew what they were expected to provide to the apprentices and trainees. The GTO would not deal with any hosts that were perceived to be seriously deficient, and would not expect hosts to persevere with apprentices and trainees that did not meet expectations, unless the GTO placed them with hosts at a discounted rate in a clearly understood 'remedial' situation. It was also apparent, though, that the system did not always work as intended. Although the host employers were carefully selected, well briefed and intended to do the right thing, in the end the experience of the apprentices and trainees was mediated heavily by their workplace supervisors. Where supervisors were not aware of the mutual expectations or not committed to fulfilling them, problems could easily occur. In the case of the ElectroGTO apprentices, these difficulties were compounded by the high-pressure and predominantly commercial project focus of many of the host employers, where apprentices were placed in large numbers to provide site labour. The suggestions made by the different parties for improving

understanding of mutual expectations were excellent in theory, but it is difficult to see how these suggestions could be implemented in such an environment.

## Case study - RestaurantCo

### Introduction and overview of traineeship program

This case study was carried out in RestaurantCo (a pseudonym), a company which operated quick service restaurants and held corporate franchises for two major companies in Australia and New Zealand. The case study focused on the division managing the restaurants franchised from the fried-chicken brand of a major international food service company. RestaurantCo held the franchise for Queensland and a town on the NSW-Queensland border.

The division consisted of 118 stores divided into 11 geographical areas; there were 4900 employees, with an annual labour turnover of 78%, which was in line with industry norms in an industry where much of labour force consisted of students. Most of the workers in the stores were casually employed, thus leading to a relatively large number of employees for the size of store; for example the store that was visited, although quite small, had 45 employees.

The traineeship program had begun 11 years previously, as a result of collaboration between the HR Manager and an Australian Apprenticeship Centre (AAC, or NAC as it was then). Traineeships were able to be introduced because at that time the regulatory framework changed to allow part-time traineeships. At the time of the case study, the traineeship program covered Certificate II through the Certificate IV in Retail; and the Diploma of Management. Over 1000 people had completed traineeships at RestaurantCo since the program had commenced; this represented a completion rate of over 90%.

The Certificate II was available as a school-based traineeship or to part-time or full-time team members who worked over 15 hours a week and had completed 12 months service; team members could then progress through to III and IV. There were only about 30 school-based trainees at any one time. The Diploma was available to branch managers and assistant managers who had not completed a Diploma qualification or above and were not currently studying Business or Commerce; they must have completed a Certificate II or III in retail. The Diploma was a new program for RestaurantCo with 60 initial participants. No traineeships were available to non-Australian residents. All traineeship training was carried out by Retail RTO (a pseudonym), a large Queensland-based private RTO specialising in retail training. Retail RTO also carried out other training for the company, such as food safety training.

### Research method

Interviews took place over one day in June 2010 in Brisbane. Three interviews were undertaken in a city-centre branch of the company. The Human Resources manager was interviewed at the offices of Retail RTO, where the trainer responsible for the RestaurantCo contract was also interviewed. The HR Manager also provided documents relating to the traineeship program.

**Table 2 Interviews: RestaurantCo**

Interview Number	Job title	Organisation/Location	Gender	Age	Approx length of time with company
1	HR Manager, RestaurantCo	RestaurantCo	F	-	15 years
2	Store Manager	RestaurantCo, city-centre store	F	26	9 years Ex-trainee
3	Trainee 1 (shift supervisor) (full-time)	RestaurantCo, city-centre store	F	21	2 years Cert III; ex-Cert II trainee
4	Trainee 2 (30 hours p.w.)	RestaurantCo, city-centre store	F	25	Almost 2 years Cert III; ex-Cert II trainee
5	Trainer and assessor	Retail RTO	M	-	10 years for RestaurantCo; 10 years with Retail RTO

Interviews took between 20 minutes and one hour, with the majority lasting over 40 minutes. A detailed interview protocol was utilised, in common with the other case studies. The interviews were taped, with permission, and transcribed, and then analysed to draw out themes.



The generalisability of the findings of the case study are somewhat limited by the fact that the store that was visited was what might be termed a 'demonstration store'. Due to its location near the company head office and the RTO it was often used to show the company to visitors. In addition the trainees that were interviewed were both workers in their mid-20s with long work histories and perhaps a greater insight into management processes than most.

## Findings

### *What are the promises in the psychological contract?*

The company saw the traineeship program as being, as the HR Manager put it, 'all about skills development and productivity, retention and people capability'. It was intended to deliver future management; the parent company expected 80% of managers to come from the internal labour market, and traineeships played an important role in achieving that. Since there was an inherent danger that outside perspectives might be lacking with such a strong internal promotion process, traineeships provided a valuable means for trainees to learn about different ways of doing things and to mix with people from other stores. The program involved six days of off the job training each year for this reason. Initially the programs had been all on the job but 'it just wasn't working... it was a disaster', as the HR Manager said.

The trainees thought that offering a traineeship was a sign of a good company.

Well, they're just like saying we want to make our employees better or we want to help them better their future and stuff, instead of just like, you're just an employee, who cares. So yeah, it's pretty good... They want to better me and help me reach my goals and stuff. (Trainee 1)

The following lists of promises were derived from conversations with all of the participants. In some cases they were explicitly stated by the participants; in other cases they were derived by the researcher.

From the company side the promises were as follows:

- Reward staff who were performing well and showing good motivation and drive;
- Provide a pathway into management;
- Pay staff on traineeships the normal wage not a training wage, including payment for training time even for school-based trainees;
- Intervene to provide assistance to enable trainees to complete their traineeship;
- Allow trainees to continue in their jobs even if they abandoned the traineeship;
- Provide a good quality training program including a substantial off-the-job component and up-to-date information;
- Make the training interesting;
- Provide support with completion of the training;
- Provide in-store support to help with training;
- Provide enough time in working hours to complete homework;
- Always release staff for off-the-job training;
- Provide trainees with enough hours of work for a living wage

The company paid the same wages as other employees; as the HR Manager put it, 'Why should someone be paid less for actually developing their skills?' She acknowledged that it was possible for companies to look at incentives rather than long-term benefit and said:

'that's what has always been my concern, these sorts of programs getting in the hands of the wrong people that only see the bottom line benefits rather than actually the process and the value-add. That's why, I suppose, I've continued to manage it all this time as well, because I know in the wrong hands it might lose the objective that it's set out to achieve.... There are some other competitors in the industry that probably have given traineeships a bad name just by the way they've exploited the system for their own financial gain.'

On the trainee side, the obligations were seen as to:

- Complete the training course;
- Meet the legal obligations of the training contract,
- Inform the company if they are struggling with the traineeship;
- Fulfil normal employee expectations in terms of trust, reliability, attendance etc;

- Show commitment to the program;
- Be punctual and attend regularly both at work and at class;
- Behave properly in class;
- Observe dress standards at training;
- Collaborate with other trainees to learn and to complete group assignments;
- Complete assignments on time;
- Ask for help if they need it
- Take their work more seriously than non-trainees, and be more accountable;
- Take on more responsibility than staff not on traineeships, and provide leadership to other staff;
- Use what they learned from the program in their work.

There was general agreement among the participants on the above points, although none all mentioned all of them. The trainees interviewed were positive about their traineeships; as Trainee 2 said, 'I thought it would be a great experience, I would get a chance to learn while I'm getting paid for it.'

### *How is the psychological contract developed within the workplace, for all parties?*

The traineeship program was well embedded within the company. As it had been in operation for eleven years everybody was very familiar with the program. Eleven current restaurant general managers had begun with RestaurantCo as trainees in the initial intake. Leaflets about traineeships were provided in every store and were aimed at potential trainees and their parents as well as current employees. The HR Manager said,

'It's a wonderful little brochure and then it's got all the success stories on it. That's actually available in each restaurant for customers, parents, participants ... it's an attraction and engagement tool.'

Thus it was hoped that everybody was well aware of what the expectations and obligations were, on both sides. However, there was reported to be some variation among stores in the extent to which managers explained and marketed the traineeships and the expectations involved. Store managers seemed to be very important in interpreting traineeships to the workers. A particular issue seemed to be that people thought the requirements of the training component might be more rigorous than they actually were; they might see it as being like going back to school and 'doing tests' and the store manager said that expectations of the difficulty might be linked to their expectations of apprenticeships which were said to have a reputation of being difficult.

Traineeships were embedded in all HR processes. The HR Manager said

'We also use it in performance management; we've also linked it in career development and basically into our employer branding strategies as well. So we've taken it to fit in - it's not a process seen in isolation; it's part of our way of developing people.'

Employees were made aware of how the traineeship program fitted with advancement through career levels - 'the alignment is very clear' according to the HR manager.

A number of people were responsible for delivering the promises in the psychological contract: the area manager, the store management team and the RTO. The area managers were encouraged and trained to view traineeships as a high priority- to become 'people driven rather than results-driven'; traineeships were seen to deliver better results, in any case. The area managers were expected to 'cascade' advocacy of traineeships into the stores. Education about traineeships was foregrounded in store manager training. The RTO trainer had spoken in each region, to meetings of the area managers and their teams of store managers.

As trainees progressed through the Certificate levels, the company expected them to perform at a higher level and to work harder on their RTO training. The trainees expected to be given appropriate work in the stores to support the higher level learning that they were doing.

### *What impacts do RTOs, intermediary organisations and other stakeholders have on the construction of the psychological contract?*

At RestaurantCo, there were two main additional parties to the psychological contract besides the company and the worker: the AAC and the RTO. Both had been involved with the program from its inception. The relationship with the AAC was much closer than was normally the case for AACs. Once

a store nominated a staff member for a traineeship the AAC did all the necessary paperwork and signed up the trainee. At this time the expectations on both sides were outlined by the AAC officer. The AAC liaised with the RTO to ensure that the company received payments according to trainees' progress. In some respects the AAC seemed to be filling some of the roles that in other traineeship arrangements was undertaken by the GTO. At Retail RTO, several training officers including the present one had previously worked for the company. In fact, working for Retail RTO was seen as one of the career pathways available to RestaurantCo staff, according to the HR Manager. The RTO had originally been selected from among six invited to present to the company. At that time it had been very small but had grown along with the company; it clearly had a great deal invested in the relationship.

While the role of the external parties was important, their integral position in the traineeship arrangements for the company could also be a difficulty. As the HR Manager said,

'I often refer to it as a wheel. There's all these cogs in the wheel and if all the cogs - as I was saying earlier, if all the cogs are aligned it works perfectly, but one part of the process falls over it becomes a nightmare. ... There's so many stakeholders in the wheel here and if everybody's linked it works perfectly. But if everyone's not meeting the expectations of their role, that's when these things do fall over.... For example, we just lost our wonderful account manager at XXX (the AAC) and she was just terrific, absolutely terrific. Really, she had that psychological contract, which is where your study is, a psychological contract with the trainee and obviously the follow-up calls and everything they did in terms of getting the person onboard. She had got to know people by name and knew all the stores and all the rest of it. She moved onto another job and it was six weeks before that position was replaced. Well, in that six weeks I had 93 outstanding contracts that needed to be signed up. Now, when you've got that sort of volume - and it was the same time we launched the diploma - because of the delays there, people who had nominated, they hadn't heard anything for four to six weeks, those sorts of things, they started to disengage from the process.'

The interdependence of the parties was noted by other participants. The RTO trainer thought that sometimes stores managers might not fulfil their responsibilities with relation to the traineeship because the RTO role was foregrounded so much:

'But sometimes they tend to think, oh well, they've gone to [Retail RTO]. [Retail RTO] can look after everything. But you need that support on both sides to actually get these people to complete 100 per cent.'

He also put forward a view that the AAC staff sometimes did not explain the system clearly enough to trainees and to parents (where the trainee was under 18). The store manager, likewise, said that it was important for people in her position to trust that the RTO was doing the right thing.

Because of the fact that trainees were selected from among existing workers, the change that came about when they were recruited to the traineeship was that they began a relationship with the RTO. Thus it was not surprising that the workers saw the RTO training as the key feature of their traineeship. While the HR Manager saw the relationship with the company and with the RTO as being of equal importance, the trainees saw the expectations and obligations of the traineeship as being primarily about the relationship between themselves and the RTO. For example, Trainee 1 said that it was really difficult when the RTO trainer left, although she now thought the new trainer was 'awesome'. She said, 'The transition was really hard', and that it took a while to build up trust with the new trainer.

As well as these four parties there were more distant partners. These included the government at both State and federal levels, as the HR Manager pointed out; both education departments and industrial relations departments were important. In addition, for school-based traineeships, the school and the parents were part of the relationship. Schools had another role too; the HR Manager considered that schools did a good job in educating students about the benefits of traineeships so that young people understood what was involved.

### *What helps all parties fulfil their side of the psychological contract and what prevents it?*

Careful selection of participants was a key factor in ensuring that the psychological contract in traineeships was met on all sides. As the HR manager put it,

'I'm not interested in completing cancellation forms every few weeks. I'm actually interested in doing the completion forms. So ... I do make it quite clear that we're particularly not interested in people that are not looking for skills development, retention or that next career step...why put people through a process where they've got no interest? It's not fair to the other participants; it's not fair to the program and it's certainly not fair to the stakeholders that run the program.'

Thus traineeships were seen as a reward for good performance, reliability and motivation, and a development tool for those who saw their careers developing within the company or the industry more broadly. The store manager said that her choices were made in the following manner:

(It's) just my own personal feeling or if they're a good staff member, if they're a good person, a good staff member at work then I'll let them do a traineeship. But if there's someone who doesn't turn up to their shifts and calls in sick all the time and doesn't follow the rules, then I don't think they should be doing a traineeship because they're not going to take it seriously.

The store manager noted that where bad selection decisions were made, trainees were unlikely to succeed and would also disrupt classes for other people. Selection into traineeships was also a factor in helping the trainees fulfil their side of the contract; Trainee 1 said that being on the program made her feel 'a bit special' and encouraged her to try harder at work.

A facilitating factor was when the store manager had himself or herself completed the traineeship program. As the RTO trainer said,

A lot of times where I sign up a new student and you identify the management team there, I can actually say to the student oh, by the way, two of your team have already been through this with me. So they will know how it runs. You'll find then that the students are supported a lot more because the management team know how it works.

One barrier, according to the HR Manager, was the need in stores to meet strict controls of labour expenditure. Traineeships were expensive for stores. This was to some extent alleviated by returning to stores the incentive payments rather than keeping them centrally, as some other organisations did, to manage the traineeship program. Another barrier was the lack of suitable participants in some stores at some times; and/or the fact that if managers did not approve of the traineeship program then they might not identify people to go on traineeships. Being employed for the appropriate number of hours was sometimes an ongoing issue. The requirement was for employment of a minimum 10 hours a week, although most people on traineeships would work for longer than that; however it seemed that for some trainees it was stressful to worry about getting enough hours, not necessarily to fulfil the requirements of the traineeship, but simply to live on.

Workload issues could make it difficult for managers to focus on the traineeship program. The RTO trainer sometimes needed to intervene on behalf of the trainee to ensure that work-based assignments could be completed. There was also a variation more generally among store managers in their commitment to the program and in their general management skills; the RTO trainer said that this could affect the trainee's commitment to the training program as well as the level of success. One trainee mentioned difficulties that trainees at another store faced:

The management's always too busy to help them and like they don't feel like they can ask all the time, and stuff like that. There are some managers out there that aren't the best.... it would make it harder for them (the trainees in that store) too. They can't trust their management so their work's not going to be as high, and they can't learn as much as say like me and XXX because we have a manager who is willing to teach us.

One trainee also reported the dissatisfaction of a trainee at another store because staff were not being treated equally and a manager was not allowing sick days. According to that trainee:

'they love the training, so there's nothing wrong with the training. Yeah, it's just workplace (issues). They want to finish their training and then leave. So the training is pretty much what's keeping them in the store at the moment.'

Distance could be a barrier; the most remote stores did not get visited by the trainers as often as the others simple because the distances were so great; phone contact was encouraged.

There were some problems related to literacy levels or other needs for extra training support. According to the store manager, the expectation was that completing a traineeship would not be like returning to school; but once Certificate III was reached, the literary and occasionally numeracy demands were fairly high. However, support and coaching was provided by the RTO and by store managers. The store manager judged Cert III to be equivalent to Year 10 or 11; Trainee 2 that it was equivalent to Year 11 or 12. Trainee 2 said that some parts of Cert II were quite tough while Trainee 1 felt it was equivalent to Year 10.

Another potential barrier was government policy on the incentives that were needed to ensure that all parties could continue to fulfil their obligations to the trainee. Recently the State government had withdrawn funding for Certificate II retail training, except for school-based trainees, meaning that the whole traineeship system at RestaurantCo was threatened; a solution was brokered among the parties, which was not described in detail, but which presumably involved some cross-subsidisation.

### *What is the impact of a fulfilled versus a breached psychological contract?*

Where the psychological contract was fulfilled on all sides, the trainee would complete successfully, progress to the next stage and in a relatively short space of time would become a store assistant manager then manager, and eventually have a role in delivery of the traineeship program. The stores would increase their productivity and customer satisfaction, and would be happier places in which to work. According to the store manager, this sequence of events depended on the store managers having good enough judgment to select appropriate people for traineeships and therefore as potential managers.

The training part of the traineeship was important to the trainees. One part of the contract that was especially appreciated by store staff was that they were paid for their training days. As the store manager said, people's reaction was 'Oh wow, that's cool'. They also appreciated the interest and variety added by attending off the job, with other people. 'Going somewhere with a classroom of people and talking about different things makes it a lot more fun'. The store manager said that 'fun' was not an expectation originally. Trainee 1 said that the traineeship was much better than she expected: 'it's a lot more interactive'. She enjoyed the fact that it was not 'like sitting in school listening to a teacher' and that she was able to work on homework that was directly related to her role as a shift supervisor. She also enjoyed working with fellow trainees on assignments.

If a trainee did not wish to complete the traineeship they could return to being a normal employee. The HR Manager said that sometimes people did not really understand the expectations ('I call it reality shock syndrome') and could withdraw from the program. However there seemed to be a belief in the store that was visited, that trainees might lose their job if they dropped out. The store manager said that she would feel personally disappointed if a trainee did not wish to complete because it would mean her selection decision was proved wrong:

'I'd feel let down and I'd feel stupid... Yeah I'd look like a fool because I've said this person's good and they're just quitting, so that would be a disappointment.'

If problems appeared to be occurring, as notified either via the workplace or the RTO, the company had an intervention process which could include mediation with the trainee and his or her parents. The company had the goal of resolving issues internally rather than notifying the State Education Department of 'failure to progress'.

The RTO trainer said that while at Cert III level and above, trainees were normally fulfilling their side of the contract (in relation to the training) at Cert II level only about 60% were doing so. Some Cert II trainees 'played up' in class and did not complete their assessment tasks. School-based trainees tended to be the least assiduous. He felt that was an age-related issue.

The media also had a role; the HR Manager and trainer both said that traineeships sometimes had a negative perception of traineeships from press and television reports about employers focusing on financial incentives; thus there was sometimes a barrier created by suspicion from the trainees and/or their parents.

### *How can mutual expectations be made clearer?*

The HR Manager believed that the average teenager would not necessarily be interested in knowing any more about the expectations on both sides. As she put it,

'Put yourself in the shoes of a 15/16 year old. You go and join the fast food industry. Oh yeah, I'd like to do a traineeship, that'll give me a qualification as well as my education as school. Who's driving it? Where does it come from? Who are the stakeholders? What are the difficulties? What are the barriers? They wouldn't have that level of understanding. They just see a process.'

She believed that the current arrangements worked quite well and that the key feature was that due to lack of resources within the company to manage the large traineeship program it had been necessary to instil a great deal of accountability from the AAC and the RTO. The system did however need constant monitoring, particularly when new staff were employed at the AAC. It was interesting to note, however, that the store manager said that problems to do with traineeships did not regularly get discussed at store manager meetings.

At the lower level some practical suggestions were made. The RTO trainer thought that a manager's handbook on traineeships would be useful, while recognising that not all managers would actually read it. This idea was also suggested by the store manager. Given unlimited time and money, the RTO trainer said he would like to visit each of the stores, sit down with the management team and explain the system to them. One of the trainees said that trainees should only be given to store managers who had undertaken the traineeship themselves, or at least the managers should be given a thorough

induction to the program. She mentioned that during her training she had worked under one manager who had not been a trainee himself, and that she thought perhaps he was frustrated that the trainees did not ask him for assistance. This trainee also suggested that the RTO trainers should all have to go and work in a store for a day if they hadn't previously worked for the company.

The store manager said that a head office staff member should be present at the signing of the contract so that there was a clear RestaurantCo presence. She suggested that group sessions with head office staff might be organised for new trainees rather than leaving it to store managers and the AAC staff to outline expectations:

(They should) just have someone come down so it's clear expectations. I mean I can say it, and I do, but I think when it comes from someone in head office people take things a little bit more serious. There might be things that I don't know that they are aware of and can give more information on and all those kinds of things. But when they sign you up it will go through how long you'll be doing it for and all those kind of things and a few expectations. But there's no real bottom line as such. They do go through it in their contract and stuff but it's probably just not as clear as what it could be.

This group session could be carried out in geographical areas, or even via a DVD that the trainee could watch with the manager. Without senior company input, managers' handling of expectations was really based only on their own experiences or their own interpretation of company policy. The store manager said that part of the DVD should be to 'make them feel a little bit more comfortable, that it's not this big, scary, huge thing.'

## Conclusion and key findings

At RestaurantCo, the traineeship program was a large-scale human resource strategy that embedded progressive gaining of qualifications within the store promotions processes. Risk was removed from the program by two major factors: confining entry to the program to existing workers recommended by store managers and building long-term relationships with the AAC and the RTO. While the trainees who were interviewed were satisfied with their traineeships, it was evident from reports of other stores and other trainees that problems could arise when store managers were not fully committed to the program. In these cases the psychological contract could be breached. The integrated nature of the major players in the program was advantageous to some extent but could be a problem as the fulfilment of the trainees' expectations was distributed among those parties. The company, in short, needed to worry quite a lot about the performance of the RTO and the AAC while not having direct control of their activities. In a sense much of the activity ran 'in the background', but discussion with the store level staff indicated that awareness of such issues was greater than the company perhaps realised.

## Case study - RegionalGTO

### Introduction and overview of apprentice/trainee program

This case study was carried out in a large Group Training Organisation (GTO) located across several towns throughout central west New South Wales. It was a not for profit organisation. This RegionalGTO, celebrated 27 years of operation in 2010 and was one of the largest GTOs in Australia. It employed up to 1000 Apprentices and Trainees in over 100 different vocations across regional NSW. Over the past 27 years, thousands of young adults have successfully completed their training through the organisation. 2005 saw the maximum numbers of apprentices and trainees signed up and since this time there has been a slight decline in numbers.

Popular traineeships were: Automotive, Business Administration, Engineering, floristry, Forestry, Furnishing, Horticulture, Hospitality, Info Technology, Retail, Rural, Sport & Recreation and Transport. There were about 300 trainees at the time of the case study.

Popular apprenticeships were: Automotive, Baking, Beauty Therapy, Bricklaying, Cabinet Making, Carpentry, Cooking, Drafting, Electrical, Engineering Fabrication, Engineering Mechanical, Floor Tiling, Fitter Machinist, Glazing, Greenkeeping, Hairdressing, Horticulture, Landscaping, Meat Processing, Panel Beating, Painting & Decoration, Plumbing, Plastering, Printing, Refrigeration, Roof Tiling, Shopfitting And Spray Painting. The market share was about 25 per cent of all the apprentices in the region, and the completion rates overall were around 60 per cent.

Apprentices and trainees were employed by the GTO and worked with host employers. This allowed the employer to utilise staff that met their current needs and the apprentice/trainee to gain experience across several workplaces. The host paid a fee to the GTO and in return the GTO took on all the responsibilities of employing the apprentice/trainee. As part of their role the GTO undertook to 'take back' apprentices or trainees if the relationship between the host employer and the apprentice/trainee broke down; or if economic circumstances in the particular industry meant that the company could no longer afford the apprentice or trainee. The GTO could also rotate apprentices and trainees between different employment sites to broaden the experiences and skills of the apprentices and trainees. According to the CEO, "in a typical year we might have between 350 and 400 handed back to us or rotated between employers".

RegionalGTO employed over 40 staff throughout its six full-time offices in Bathurst, Orange, Parkes, Cowra, Dubbo and Lithgow. It also had outreach office services in Mudgee, Young and Tamworth. The Group Training Manager was responsible for all branches and was held accountable for the performance of the branches. There were currently two Area Managers who were responsible for the larger branches and the part-time branches who reported to the Group Training Manager. RegionalGTO had a large payroll department, a Safety Officer, field staff who implemented the supervision plans with a caseload of 60 to 70 apprentices and trainees, an executive team of five people, a Manager of the RTO and assessors.

### Research method

Contact was initially made with the CEO who was informed of the requirements for the research project via e-mail; with the information sheets attached containing an outline of the project. Once they were aware of the needs of the project, they arranged for the participants to be available. Interviews were undertaken over a period of two days with stakeholders from all levels involved with the training. This included the CEO, Western Area Manager, Group Training Manager, Training Manager, Team Leader/Field Officer, host employers, apprentices and trainees. Interviews occurred during the month of August 2010. Table 3 demonstrates the breadth of interviews carried out.

Each interview lasted between 15 minutes to just over the hour; with the majority lasting around 20-30 minutes. Some of the participants gave the shorter interviews and were unused to the interview process and were reluctant to discuss in depth concepts that related to them. A detailed interview protocol was utilised, in common with the other case studies. The interviews were taped, with permission, and transcribed, and then analysed to draw out themes used in the next section of the case study.

**Table 3 Interviews: RegionalGTO**

Interview Number	Job title	Gender	Age	Approx length of time with company
1	CEO	M		
2	Western area manager and Operations Manager	M		6 months
3	Group Training manager	F		4 years
4	Training manager: RTO Manager	M		3 months
5	Team Leader/Field Officer	F		5 years
6	Host employer-building company	M		
7	Host employer - engineering	M		
8	Host no 2	F		
9	Apprentice carpenter	M	17-18	7 months
10	Apprentice fitter machinist	M	?20	7 months
11	Apprentice Carpenter	M		Completed 2009
12	Trainee Cert II office assistant	F	18	In progress

## Findings

### *What are the promises in the psychological contract?*

RegionalGTO regarded its primary responsibilities under the provisions of the psychological contract to provide a safe workplace, to fulfil their duty of care, to ensure that the workplace is free from harassment, to make sure that the apprentices and trainees are trained correctly and to find alternative placements in the event of a breakdown in the workplace.

Beyond these obvious promises that were circumscribed by legislation and compliance the GTO also undertook a range of activities to support the apprentices and trainees to be realistic, well informed and capable in their chosen area. In this way the process of the selection, and then the matching, of the applicant to a particular industry area was a 'promise' within the psychological contract. The GTO undertook to discharge its responsibility

to identify their (the apprentices) limitations and put them in a trade that they are going to be suited to. So for example, if they're not fantastic with the written word but they're OK with things like measurements for example, bricklaying might be a fantastic trade for them.

(Group Training Manager)

The GTO interviewed and then 'screened' the applicants to ensure that they were placed in a trade where they were likely to have the best chance of success.

RegionalGTO had recently revised its screening and recruitment questionnaire in order to better match potential apprentices and trainees with employers. The questionnaire included questions about their expectations of their potential bosses. This served a dual purpose. Firstly, it provided information on the attitudes of the candidates towards employers and TAFE study. Secondly, it helped to inform the applicants about the expectations that surrounded their apprenticeship or traineeship as the questions were asked; "do they realise that that's what will be required of them and are they prepared to do that if that's the trade they're after? A lot of people wouldn't have looked into that. They wouldn't know" (Group Training Manager). The questionnaire also asked potential apprentices and trainees about their financial situation, their capacity to budget and their living arrangements in the hope that they would be realistically informed about their earnings. In this way the activity was mutually informing both parties about the 'promises' and conditions entailed in the psychological contract.

The GTO's questionnaire went on to ask the apprentices about their expectations about their training and the timeframes involved.

What sort of training do you expect to get? So if you want to be a first year hairdresser what sort of tasks do you think you'll be doing in your first year? Because we don't want there to be a mismatch between them going on and thinking that within the first year they'll be cutting hair and doing colours and getting all their friends around on weekends and doing all their hair and getting cash jobs, because actually they'll be sweeping up hair.

(GTO Manager)



These reality-checking questions allowed RegionalGTO to gauge the suitability of the applicants and give the applicants a “very realistic appraisal of what it’s going to be like” (CEO).

The Training Manager and Manager of RegionalRTO with primary responsibility for the 300 trainees felt that the GTO ‘promised’ to guarantee a quality learning process for the predominantly on-the-job trainees. “If we have a traineeship then we have an obligation to make sure they’re OK and they’re moving along with their traineeships” (Training Manager). This commitment or ‘promise’ had its practical expression in the processes of monitoring, supervision and follow up of problems that the GTO used.

On a larger scale RegionalGTO extended its ‘promises’ to a broader canvas. The GTO serviced a rural and regional constituency and it saw its role as being a quality assurance role that provided services to small businesses,

who aren’t necessarily on top of it. We come in and implement all the arrangements and do it in a fashion that’s above board and correct is taking the stress away from them. Our role is to make sure that things are implemented properly and that people are paid properly and the apprentices aren’t getting ripped off and making sure that the Apprentice Training Contracts, the National Training Contracts, are actually registered.

(Group Training Manager)

The apprentices interviewed felt that punctuality, working to the best of their ability, undertaking their TAFE studies and doing what they are told were ‘promises’ that they made under the terms of the psychological contract. In return they expected that the employers would accord them the respect they need as ‘learners’, and not be too harsh with them.

The trainee interviewed in this case study chose this pathway because she “decided to look for work and I thought it’s probably best if I got a certificate behind me in what I did” (Trainee Office Assistant). She was completing her traineeship on the job and it was organised through RegionalGTO. She had regular visits from the GTO representative but no workplace supervisor that she could identify. She considered that her ‘promises’ to the GTO were “to do all the tasks and to stay a good trainee. Complete all my tasks and do everything that I’m meant to do like show up to work and actually compete my training” (Trainee Office Assistant). In the absence of structured and supportive workplace training, the trainees often expected that the assessors would be able to do more “than the system is actually structured to give them” (Training Manager) and this trainee confirmed this.

The quality of loyalty, rather than being a ‘promise’ within the psychological contract could be construed as something that develops with time.

If you’re having a good employment experience, you like your boss, the TAFE stuff is going well, you can stay at home, all of those other factors are going okay then you build up loyalty and you will put up with some stuff and it builds your resilience. I think a lot of apprentices would perhaps understand theoretically that they’re in a contractually binding arrangement with their employer. However, I think there’s a disregard for that kind of authoritarian approach and there are no sanctions. They understand that actually there are options, and if they didn’t want to do this any longer then they simply stop turning up.

(CEO)

The ‘promises’ that are made in the psychological contract did not always align. For instance the Operations Manager in RegionalGTO commented,

Initially the apprentices expect that the host will be open to them making mistakes and be open to them having to learn a job. There’s an expectation that probably the host will be very accepting of the way the apprentice sees life and undertakes life. In actuality from the host’s point of view they probably see the reverse. They’ll expect the young person to assimilate into their culture within their business and in a lot of ways I think that the apprentices tend to feel like, no they’ll keep their identity and individuality.

(Operations Manager)

### *How is the psychological contract developed within the workplace for all parties?*

The negotiation of the psychological contract began before applications for apprenticeships and traineeships were lodged. RegionalGTO had ‘a very high engagement with schools’ (CEO). A number of programs gave

students an opportunity to talk to tradespeople and apprentices about what to expect. Because the cornerstone of the completion debate is really about having realistic expectations about what you’re getting yourself into because it’s a long training program. You need a whole lot of other support structures to get through.

(CEO)

The psychological contract was developed in the workplace in a number of different ways. Firstly, RegionalGTO had an ongoing responsibility to the apprentices and trainees as set out in the Service Standards of the organisation. If the psychological contract between the apprentice/trainee and the host employer was breached irreparably then;

obviously we have an obligation to try and find them an alternative placement at the time when they may be handed back. We'll pay them for four weeks from the time the host employer gives notice that they'll hand them back. We commit to approaching at least ten alternative placements. So there's a number of obligations like that but it's primarily to find them an alternative place.  
(Group Training Manager)

The psychological contract altered over the duration of the apprenticeship/traineeship. The ways in which it was understood particularly by the apprentices changed during the first two years. The CEO commented that;

Their drivers and motivations when they first come are quite different to what they're like at that kind of crucial second year point where they've got skills and the kinds of things that they would put up with at the beginning of the process they're not prepared to put up with now. They have changed and they say: "I'm prepared to put in but you need to recognise and reward the skills I acquire". There's a disconnect there between what traditional people who completed their trade in a kind of master servant relationship feel and the expectations of the apprentices. (CEO)

The 'promises' of the host employer and the apprentice also developed and changed during the apprenticeship. These were not always in harmony. The Operations Manager in the GTO suggested that initially the apprentice expected to undertake rather menial tasks and expected to be guided a great deal by the host employer. They also expected that this level of guidance would gradually drop off the further they got into their apprenticeship. The host employer generally expected that by the time they reached their third year "that they should be able to start doing jobs with lesser instruction" (Operations Manager) and their responsibilities under the terms of the psychological contract became different.

### *What impacts do RTOs, intermediary organisations and other stakeholders have on the construction of the psychological contract*

There were many participants who had roles to play in the construction and development of the psychological contract. There were a broad range of stakeholders including the GTO staff who assumed responsibility for the apprentices and trainees. In the case of trainees, each trainee and employer received a 'handbook', which explained his or her respective roles. The GTO representative went through the handbook during the process of sign-up.

The trainees select their units and usually I sit down with the employer and the employee and do that together. We have a supervisors' handbook which tells them about their role and some good advice on how to coach them and work with their students.

(Training Manager)

The Australian Apprenticeship Centre (AAC) staff member also contributed, by providing information on the Code of Conduct, during the induction process and by organising the 'sign ups'. This person also provided an explanation of the individualised Training Plan.

In some cases the overlapping roles of the GTO and the AAC resulted in time-consuming double handling of sign ups in traineeships. The psychological contract could become blurred at best, and confused at worst.

There are a lot of potential errors (breaches) - communication errors - that every time you have a communication error it can mess up the traineeships and cause all sorts of problems. There are too many players involved in one bureaucracy and it could be made a much simpler process.

(Training Manager)

In the case of traineeships the assessors also had a critical role in the construction and implementation of the psychological contract. The Training Manager asserted that "assessors are our main front person". The assessors dealt directly with the trainees and provided support with their learning materials and general advice and guidance. It was interesting to note that this dimension of the psychological contract was becoming more mediated and blurred with the progressive introduction of online learning and assessment. Online learning and the subsequent assessment of trainees had an effect on both the perception and reality of the psychological contract. This practice was increasingly financially expedient and reduced the face-to-face contact between the assessor and trainee. Both parties involved felt that this compromised some of the terms of the psychological contract.

The assessors themselves don't like it and the trainees don't like it. They usually like to have someone sit there and talk to them. The computer skills of the trainees are often not up to it and they don't have access to a computer. So the actual personal contact is really important. (Training Manager)

Families played a big role in the construction of the psychological contract; one young apprentice reported on the lecture that he received from his grandfather. "He went on about 'how would I get by if I lost my license?' All my responsibilities" (Apprentice: 7 months). It was also the case that parents would often 'choose' the first career for a student straight from school. The apprentices interviewed commented on the fact that members of their families had been supportive, directive and enculturating about the trades they were going to enter as apprentices.

Friends were also significant stakeholders in the construction of the psychological contract. Friends were often used to confirm the validity or otherwise of individual working conditions, conditions of pay and ways of being treated on site. One of the apprentices commented that the existence of a supportive 'mate culture' helped him to develop his sense of place in the company. This was reinforced through sharing social events and this enculturation bred resilience and patience with the work he was required to do.

There was often a mutual relationship between TAFE and the work site. One young apprentice who had been employed for seven months commented on this complementarity when he said: "They're trying to teach you the theory side, how to do things whereas on site you're just sort of doing it practically. You get shown how to do it but at TAFE you see what's behind- the reasons behind why you're doing that" (Apprentice: 7 months). This could be seen as a complementary relationship.

### *What helps all parties fulfil their side of the psychological contract and what prevents it?*

The process of 'screening' the applicants, that underpinned the recruitment of apprentices and trainees, helped RegionalGTO fulfil its side of the psychological contract. This process ensured that the ability levels of the applicants were matched as closely as possible to the demands of the particular industry area that they were moving into. The development of the screening was a response to high levels of attrition that in turn was attributed to less than inadequate recruitment processes. The GTO devoted time, energy and resources to refining this stage of the psychological contract. In particular it was looking at the issue of 'stick-ability'. For this reason they had included in their screening questionnaire "a question that tells us whether or not they're just committed to getting a trade or whether they're highly motivated towards one particular vocation" (Group Training Manager). The questionnaire then went on to explore a number of different facets of the psychological contract by tapping into the vocational attitudes of the potential apprentices and trainees. There were questions about "how important it is for them to have a good boss and what do they think that looks like and what they are expecting from your boss" (Group Training Manager). The answers then informed the matching process.

The advantages for smaller employers in rural and regional communities of an 'arm's length recruitment process' was that they had access to sound and thorough systems for recruitment, screening, induction, supervision and performance management. The other advantage was that if the psychological contract was breached the employer was able to 'hand the apprentice back' without prejudicing the position of either the employer or the apprentice.

The GTO maintained that by giving young people an accurate and realistic appraisal of what the apprenticeship was likely to involve it would be "able to get people with stickability and resilience through, then that will end up being a lot less work and we will have a much higher completion rate" (CEO and Training Manager).

The induction process was thorough but perhaps overwhelming for the new apprentices and trainees. This process was intended to cement some of the terms and conditions of the psychological contract. Functionally however this could be overwhelming and may not achieve the goal of supporting the psychological contract.

We go through OH&S with them and they've got a day where they've got a Field Officer going through a whole range of information in the booklet, getting them to sign probably 10 forms, and then the Apprenticeship centre person coming in and explaining a whole heap of things to the as well. It's incredibly overwhelming. (Group Training Manager)

Supervision and performance management supported the induction and screening processes used by RegionalGTO.

We have our minimum supervision meetings for both apprentices and trainees. We do a mid probation and end probation. Then we do six monthly performance reviews that are more formal. We then do re-inductions, we monitor them at TAFE and sort out any issues that come up.  
(Supervisor)

These procedures were particularly helpful in supporting the apprentices and trainees who were very recent school leavers. “It can be quite daunting for them to go from school to work; a big jump and we’re there to support them through that” (Supervisor).

The GTO has recognised that there is often a mismatch between what the apprentices/trainees were expecting in their workplaces and the reality that was uncovered. “We realise the potential problems, (particularly in relation to traineeships) and we try and make sure, whenever we sign anyone up that we explain it very clearly to them” (Training Manager). However, there was also recognition in the GTO that the complexity of the arrangements was not always comprehensible to the trainees and apprentices or their families

The CEO of the RTO was committed to improving the ‘service provision’ to both the communities and the trainees and apprentices located in these communities. This commitment resulted in detailed evaluations and research to enable them to better fulfil their side of the psychological contract.

The trainee interviewed had no one to discuss the expectations and operations of her placement in a car servicing business. She was ill prepared and this lack of preparation accounted for the disjunction between the idea of the traineeship and the reality she experienced on a day-to-day basis. “I didn’t have any mechanical knowledge and the mechanics get angry at you because you would write such and such on the work order and they’d get angry at you. And you don’t know what to do and it’s all your fault” (Trainee Office Assistant). She felt that a greater degree of support and the presence of an advocate in the workplace would have helped the situation and assisted in the fulfilment of the psychological contract. This example highlighted the importance of the host employer role and how poor performance compromised the psychological contract.

The Operations Manager with RegionalGTO felt that the living conditions and remuneration that apprentices received had a big impact on the extent to which they could practically fulfil their responsibilities under the psychological contract.

They are very disheartened with the amount of money that they receive and their parents are as well. It’s a large commitment from your life and it’s a large commitment in relation to life style for that four years. There’s not so much of going out to the pub with your friends or anything else like that.  
(Operations Manager).

The possible cost of off the job training for apprentices, particularly in those industry areas where they were required to travel to a capital city or another regional centre, was seen as a disincentive to the fulfilment of the psychological contract.

The respective levels of literacy and numeracy were not considered “critical enough to mean that they don’t complete and it’s definitely not one of the main reasons why people don’t get through” (CEO).

The role of the host employer was critical in the fulfilment or not of the psychological contract. The GTO recognised that more work needed to be done with host employers. This work focused on better informing the host employers about their responsibilities for the success or otherwise of their apprentices and trainees and about the expectations that the young people have of their ‘bosses’.

We give the hosts a pack that says these are the things that you need to do and this is what makes a good boss, but how seriously they take that and how much they want to listen is debatable. We need to sit them down and say this is the first time you’ve taken an apprentice with us. You have to do a two hour induction program as a host company and if these skills are critical to your company and you need a very high completion rate, we recommend that you do these things.  
(Group Training Manager)

Host employers also influenced the fulfilment or otherwise of the psychological contract through their treatment and recognition of their apprentices’ skills at different stages of the apprenticeship. This could be either through too much recognition and responsibility at one end of the spectrum, and far too little recognition at the other.

When they get to fourth year they expect to be treated like any other tradesman. But then there are others who feel that this is too much. That’s the art of getting it right from the host company’s point of view. You know if they get it right they’re perceived as a good boss and if they get it wrong they’re the worst bastard in the world.  
(CEO)

The past experiences of the host employers also influenced the fulfilment or otherwise of the psychological contract. In particular their experiences during their apprenticeship strongly coloured

their attitudes and behaviours to their new apprentices/trainees. Employers often understood their role to be one that was predicated on the idea that “you’re the apprentice, just do what I say. You are the person who does all the shit jobs and we take the piss out of you” (CEO). This set of attitudes that were prevalent when the employer psychological contract was in place was a traditional master-servant relationship and “that’s just not going to cut it with Gen Y” (CEO). The lack of generational understanding on the part of both the host employer and the apprentice could lead to problems that compromised the terms of the psychological contract.

The different generational thinking from the majority of our young apprentices is a major issue. We have some very competent hosts in their ability to train, but their understanding of what the value systems are of young people is definitely an issue. The hosts assume that their apprentice is more like a trades assistant rather than someone they’re supposed to be training up into the same level of proficiency as themselves. (Operations Manager)

The age of the apprentice or trainee was thought to be important in the development of the psychological contract. Between the ages of 17 and 24, young people were in a state of profound change “making the journey from adolescence to adulthood. From entry-level skills to applied learning. As well they’ve got to go through what we describe as the three G’s. They get a Gear stick when they get a car, a Girlfriend and they’re allowed to drink Grog” (CEO).

In the case of traineeships, the Training Manager felt that employers influenced the fulfilment of the psychological contract in negative ways at times. “There are some issues around some employers wanting trainees just to get the funding and they’re not really interested in actually helping them to get through” (Training Manager). The GTO identified these problems and attempted to address them and, in the most extreme cases, would not work with them again. Some employers might not necessarily have the experience or expertise to create the kinds of learning opportunities for trainees that were needed if they were going to demonstrate their competence.

The GTO used an Employment Contract with its apprentices and trainees once the Training Contract was in place. This helped to make explicit what the responsibilities of each party were under the terms of the psychological contract. The GTO was required to find an alternative placement if the current one was unworkable and the apprentice/trainee must undertake to attend interviews and work trials during this period.

Mixed with the need for clear expectations and a deep knowledge of these expectations was the fact that there appeared to be two different groups of potential apprentices and trainees. The first group

have a notion that they want to get a trade behind them. They’re highly supported and they’re highly attractive to good companies. They get picked up by good companies. They do have a good experience. The completion rates there are probably about 85 to 90 per cent. But when you take them out of the picture, there are the normal kids with the normal employers. I reckon we are only getting about 25 per cent completions. (CEO)

The intrinsic differences between the two groups identified by the CEO related to the conception that the young people had about the apprenticeship or traineeship. Some regarded it as an opportunity to ‘get a trade behind them’ while others thought of it ‘as a job, as a first job’. If this was the case then one of the critical factors in the fulfilment of the psychological contract was the provision of a good employment experience for the young person. This meant, according to the CEO, “money’s part of it, but you’ve got to have a good TAFE teacher, you’ve got to have a good boss and you’ve got to feel like you’re acquiring skills at a regular rate” (CEO). The tendency to regard this career choice as employment rather than a ‘vocation’ was more prevalent with trainees.

### *What is the impact of a fulfilled versus a breached psychological contract?*

If the psychological contract was understood as being fulfilled then the parties involved felt satisfied with their roles, enthusiastic about their work, accepting of their conditions of work and committed to each other. The strength of these attitudes and feelings were dependent on the physical distance between the parties in the psychological contract.

If either party (apprentice /trainee and host employer) in the relationship breached the psychological contract the GTO had a role in the repair of this breach. For instance, in the case of traineeships, the GTO Training Manager would step in and attempt to resolve the problems. “I see my role to talk with the trainees and the employers and try and see if we can resolve things” (Training Manager). The Operations Manager who had the role of support person, mediator and problem solver supported this intervention. If the breach involved another intermediary such as an assessor the GTO would change assessors. The GTO had a conciliatory role in attempting to reduce the impact of a breach of the psychological contract. The intention was to restore the terms of the contract so that the young person could complete.

If the psychological contract had been breached to the extent that the trainee felt that they wanted to leave the traineeship, the GTO would suggest that they moved to another employer:

From our point of view we just want to find out what the problem is and see if it's anything within our range of possibilities to deal with and we try and do that. But there's not a lot you can do if they just don't want to do this anymore.  
(Training Manager)

The trainee interviewed had very mixed feelings about her traineeship and expressed dissatisfaction with the level of workplace organisation and her treatment within it and expressed that "sometimes the workplace can get a bit disorganised and they can yell at you a lot". She did not experience supervision in the workplace and she felt that the level of support was inadequate for her needs. "There is no-one to actually sit down with you and actually make sure that you're going OK with your traineeship, and if you needed a hand with any of the work or anything. Nothing like that" (Trainee Office Assistant). These perceived breaches of the psychological contract had caused her to request a transfer to another site for the remainder of her traineeship.

### *How can mutual expectations be made clearer?*

The mutual expectations and the relationships between the various parties to the psychological contract, and intermediaries needed to be made much clearer in some instances. The proliferation of parties to the psychological contract could be simultaneously very well intentioned and confusing for employers and trainees.

"Almost every time I talk to an employer I have to explain the relationship between the Apprenticeship Centre and the RTO because we've had a few employees who have quite a lot of problems"  
(Training Manager)

## Conclusion and key findings

RegionalGTO was a highly successful not for profit organisation that had been in business for 27 years in rural and regional NSW. It placed trainees and apprentices in a wide variety of trade areas.

The GTO had developed intensive recruitment, induction and performance management processes to support trainees and apprentices in their work sites.

Induction, performance reviews and performance management helped to make the expectations clearer and this allowed for a developmental approach to be adopted as the psychological contract evolved over time. Regular feedback from supervisors in the GTO and on site supervisors that was positive and supportive also helped to make expectations clearer. If apprentices and trainees received this kind of feedback they were both rewarded and enthused.

The GTO had also recently revised its screening and recruitment questionnaire in order to better match potential apprentices and trainees with employers and included questions about the nature of the psychological contract.

The GTO also had a significant role in monitoring the progress of the apprentices and trainees and this used a case management model supported by extensive record keeping. This was particularly significant in those cases where conflict arose between the host employer, TAFE or the assessor and the GTO was committed to the process of conflict resolution.

The role of the host employer was critical in the fulfilment or not of the psychological contract. The GTO recognised that more work needed to be done with host employers. This work focused on better informing host employers about their responsibilities for the success or otherwise of their apprentices and trainees

# Case study - BuildingCo

## Introduction and overview of apprentice/trainee program

This case study was carried out in Perth, Western Australia with BuildingCo, a large privately owned Building and Construction Company that comes under the corporate umbrella of a larger Building Group that incorporated nine companies, all associated with the building industry. To support these companies the Building Group diversified and added a further nine companies linked to specific areas of the building industry such as plumbing, ceilings, concrete, roofing, designer kitchens, maker of solid surfaces, financial services and conveyancing.

The addition of a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to Building Group represented a significant change of status for this company. This change was prompted by the growing awareness within the company that they need to 'grow their own' labour supply in an assertive way. The training coordinator commented "We're not a GTO for the sake of being a GTO. We're a GTO for necessity. We need to be able to train our own apprentices. Our sub contractors use us as a GTO of choice".

The RTO had more than 300 apprentices registered and offered a choice of ten different trade apprenticeships in concreting, bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, roof plumbing, plastering, wall and ceiling fixing, plumbing and gas fitting, wall and floor tiling and painting and decorating. These apprentices worked with host employers that were contractors for the companies in the Building Group.

The Building Group was Australia's leading residential building group. As an independent business, The BuildingCo had the benefit of solid corporate support, with the freedom and accountability to define the market and specialise in their core function - providing West Australians with quality homes and the best customer service in the industry for the past 22 years. Business 2 had earned the title of 'WA's Most Awarded Builder'.

## Research method

Contact was initially made with the Apprenticeship and Training Manager who was informed as to the requirements for the research project via E-mail which had information sheets attached containing an outline of the project. The interviews with the Training Coordinator and the Human Resources Manager took place at the premises of BuildingCo on the morning of the first day. The next sets of interviews were carried out during the afternoons of day one and day two at the premises of the Building Group which was within walking distance from BuildingCo. The interviews were between 30 minutes and an hour in length, with the majority lasting around 40 minutes. Interviewees 5 and 6 (two apprentices) came from non-English speaking background. A detailed interview protocol was utilised, in common with the other case studies. The interviews were taped, with permission, and transcribed, and then analysed to draw out themes. Table 4 demonstrates the breadth of interviews carried out.

**Table 4 Interviews: BuildingCo**

Interview Number	Job title	Gender	Age	Approx length of time with company
1	Training coordinator	F	-	3 years
2	Human Resources Manager	M	-	6 months
3	Apprenticeship and Training Manager	M	-	10 years
4	Apprentice concreter	M	19	Early 2nd year - 13 months
5	Apprentice bricklayer	M	17	6 weeks
6	Apprentice concreter	M	22	Completed

The availability of the apprentices posed some problems for data collection. The building and construction industry was highly competitive; contingent on the weather and it was often the case that apprentices move from one site to another depending on the scheduling of work. In these circumstances host employers were reluctant to give permission for apprentices to come to the office for interviews. It was also difficult to arrange meetings on site. This was due to not knowing in advance, where the work would be for the days on which the visits occurred.

### *What are the promises in the psychological contract?*

The history of this company underpinned the ‘promises’ that were inherent in the psychological contract between the employer and apprentices. The company recognised the;

huge gap with all these people building and making money but nobody actually doing anything about sustainability for the future. They (the owners) realised that they had to actually get people into the trades. John and Ben are very passionate about the company and they have instigated the apprenticeship program here. (HR Manager)

This commitment to ‘growing their own’ had resulted in the creation of a group of companies (Building Group) under the common directorship of the owners. Further, the structure included a host-training arm and training managers were employed in each of the subsidiary building companies. The host trainers were therefore the sub contractors that the apprentices are attached to. At any one time there were between 280 and 350 apprentices in 10 different building and construction trades working under these arrangements. The Training Manager confirmed this when he said “we are trying to create our own workforce”.

The relationship, and by definition the psychological contract, between the apprentice and the employer was therefore mediated by the existence of various positions and roles such as seven Training Managers, the Training Coordinator, the Human Resource Manager, the company owners and the Apprenticeship Centres. It was therefore important to note that the psychological contract extended beyond the relationship between the host employer and the apprentice. There were mediating structures, roles and personnel that dispersed the responsibilities for the apprentices in particular ways amongst the various groups.

The two owners (John and Ben) had been instrumental in setting up this innovative structure. The HR manager confirmed this when he stated “They’ve both got a thirst for knowledge and a real passion about the industry. They know their stuff and something like the apprentice program and the GTO comes out of the fact that you’ve got to do stuff that’s sustainable”. The investment in succession that was represented by the apprentice program was one expression of the forward thinking that characterised this company. This forward thinking, and the background of the owners, also ensured that there was clarity about the needs and expectations of the company in relation to the apprentices. Each group of 30 to 50 apprentices were under the guidance of a training manager who “goes around and makes sure that the apprentices are engaged. The apprentices are between 15 and 20 years of age and have very little life skills” (HR Manager).

The selection processes for the company included application via the web site, an intensive interview process, unpaid work trials through work experience programs and the vetting of applicants via referrals. The company recognised the vulnerability and naivety of 15 to 20 year old apprentices as demonstrated by the HR Manager; “I mean some of them have just got no idea and often you’ll find that its mum or dad that’s actually pushing them into the trade, but what 15 or 16 year old has a good idea of what they want to do and where they want to be”.

The Training Manager therefore mentored the apprentices to create realistic and consistent expectations and this was supported by the HR Manager in that “there’s a lot of mentoring done by the Training Manager in terms of making sure that they understand that they are in a job now and they have to be there”. The expectations of punctuality, regular attendance and fair treatment were conveyed to the apprentices in explicit and regular ways. “They (the Training Managers) are actually fairly directive in terms of what is expected, but they make it clear for the apprentices what’s expected, and making it very clear what the requirements are because a lot of them have very blurred expectations of a workplace” (HR Manager).

Each new group of employees was provided with an induction during which the two owners John and Ben ‘tell the story of the company’. “They tell the story of where the group has come from, what’s the importance of the group, and John will always talk about the apprentice program, what the vision for the future is, what our core values are...so telling the story” (HR Manager). This activity provided apprentices with an initial introduction to the culture of the group and their roles and responsibilities within it.

Apprentices were encouraged to stay on after the apprenticeship was completed subject to the exigencies of the building market that was highly volatile. The apprentices understood that being offered ongoing work on the completion of their apprenticeship was contingent on what they described as being a hard worker and a good learner: “If you just keep working hard and following the rules, you will get there. Try not to disappoint them. So if you want to do those things you have to be serious about it, like don’t muck around” (Apprentice 1).



The company also provided a course on small business for the apprentices and they regarded this as part of their responsibility to the well being of this group. Coaching in small business operations occurred in the last six months of the apprenticeship. The HR Manager sighted this as being an important aspect in the apprentices training when he commented “these apprentices that have been on training wages that all of a sudden all this money’s coming in, but hang on there’s some bills coming at the end of the month for bits and pieces.... There’s a big step between being an apprentice and a trady”.

Apprentices echoed many of the dimensions or promises of the psychological contract mentioned by the managers. Issues relating to safety, protective clothing and uniforms were mentioned by all those interviewed. In particular the apprentices felt that being treated fairly was important. They also felt that the host employer and the Training Manager had a responsibility to help with problem solving and mediation in difficult circumstances. The psychological contract was not simply a relationship between the host employer and the apprentice but it expanded to include the Training Manager. As one apprentice put it

they help us out if we ever need it. Say if you might have problems with your TAFE or having problems on the site with your supervisor and you’re not getting along or something, then they can sort it out, maybe pass you on to a new one and you can try them. Just any sort of problems that you’re having with something that you can’t talk to your actual boss with, maybe something you need to say to your boss or sort out.

This apprentice felt that his reciprocal responsibilities and obligations were to

do the best I can to be ready for when I finish my apprenticeship so that I can do a good job for when I’m working with them.....so learn as much as I can as quickly as I can. Like when I get TAFE I just try and finish it in how quickly I can, like a month or just get it out of the way so I can work on other things, like the more physical sort of stuff and get that perfected before I finish.

The apprentices also expected honesty in their relationships with their bosses when discussing problems and any issues that arose in the workplace.

### *How is the psychological contract developed within the workplace for all parties?*

The operation of the psychological contract was managed intensively and it began before the applicant was signed up. Recruitment was critical as “they’re vetted here and it’s often by referral” (HR Manager).

The opportunity for a pre apprenticeship also assisted in the development of an appreciation of the psychological contract.

They’ve been out there and they’ve actually had a bit of a trial. We’ve had a trial and the training managers will actually go to the pre ap courses, build a relationship and speak to the TAFE person teaching the course and offer their work experience component out on our site. (Training Coordinator)

The reputation of the company and the online application facility generated a large number of potential applicants. The strong reputation along with word of mouth had resulted in 4 or 5 applications per day. The Training Manager claimed; “So we find that we don’t have to advertise. The recruitment part is very central. I know most of the sub contractors so when I am interviewing someone, in my mind I’m thinking ‘where’s he going?’...so that’s my matchmaking” (Training Manager).

The initial Induction process was similarly important but it was limited in its effectiveness in some people’s opinions. “One of our training managers says if you haven’t told them in the first five minutes they’re not going to listen and hear anything else. Even though we still go through our code of conduct which is umpteen pages and all the other material” (Training Coordinator).

Mentoring by training managers in terms of “what’s realistic and what they have to do....making sure they understand that they’re in a job now and they have to be there” (HR Manager) contributed to the development and mutual understanding of the psychological contract. The role of the Training Manager was crucial. This role was not supervisory; but one which involved overseeing the process of the apprenticeship. Currently the Training Manager (one of seven in the company) interviewed was responsible for 52 apprentices. When the HR Manager was discussing this role he said that;

The Training Manager would just make sure that there’s certain things that are being delivered, and he would go and discuss this with the host trainer and maybe broker some differences with the apprentices. The actual dishing out of the jobs to the host trainer comes from the supervisors in the building companies.

Training managers worked with apprentices to enculturate them to the world of work: punctuality, reliability, and a disposition to learn.

The Training Manager provided assistance with TAFE materials and learning. This was particularly relevant in the case of concreting where the TAFE materials were delivered to the apprentice's home and there was no on campus component of the course. In this instance both the employer and the Training Manager assisted the development of the psychological contract by explaining the materials and the assessment requirements.

The expectations and 'promises' of the psychological contract altered, and were interpreted differently by all the parties involved, at different stages of the apprenticeship. Initially the apprentices were inducted into the organisation and the expectations and obligations for success were made explicit. They were then supported by the Training Managers on site. Their role was to give support, advice and direction to the apprentice and to provide coaching to the on site trainer who was often, but not always, the sub contractor. Building trust and relationships of this kind took time and this developed over the period of the apprenticeship.

### *What impact do RTOs, intermediary organisations and other stakeholders have on the construction of the psychological contract?*

The complex web of 'intermediaries', in the psychological contract meant that the construction of the contract was multi faceted. The RTO in this case was part of an umbrella business for a highly successful range of building and construction companies. Its mission and values that focussed on quality and a commitment to providing a sound labour force for the industry informed its actions. The commitment also implied that mechanisms for the recruitment, induction, employment, performance management and supervision of the apprentices are solidly in place and are also constantly under evaluation. This level of RTO activity was highly influential in the 'construction' of the psychological contract. This RTOs activity extended to the host employers who were coached in their interactions and supervision of apprentices. The attitudes of host employers were seen as being highly influential and could possibly be extremely negative as noted in the following comment by the HR Manager. "They'll take an apprentice just because it's cheap. But at the end of the day we want to be there for the apprenticeship program. That's why we rely very heavily on the training managers to make sure that everything is actually happening".

The Apprenticeship Centres were also influential both in terms of the adherence of the RTO to all the compliance and regulatory responsibilities, and in terms of providing mediation in the event that the contract has been breached.

Parents could also have impacts on the construction of the psychological contract. In this company if the apprentice was under 18 years of age parents were interviewed as well as the applicant apprentice. This company regarded 'positive parents' as a real contributor to the quality of apprenticeship and the understanding of the psychological contract. "We give out guidelines from here as to what to expect and we try and involve the parents" (Training coordinator). The parents were 'inducted' into the organisation along with the apprentices "so from day one you've got commitment. They understand what's going on. They understand they're dealing with me. So if there's an issue, they know what to do" (Training Manager). BuildingCo did however acknowledge the negative impacts of parents on the psychological contract. However, the Training Managers had chosen to include, rather than exclude, them from the beginning. As the Training Manager who was interviewed said "some people see it as a weakness because after you've got another person chewing in your ear and saying this and that. But if you get them in early enough, you've got them onside and they can understand what you are doing".

TAFE also played a part in the construction of the psychological contract and, in the view of the Training Manager interviewed for this case study: "TAFE needed to adapt its pedagogies to suit the students more effectively". The Training Manager stated "it's not the case that they are dumb. We have a lot of smart people. We just need to use the correct stimulus to get them going". He commented on the inflexibility of TAFE when he said "they're so regimented. Here's your textbook. It's a theory- based test. It's a practical exam. We've got to start to do things differently".

### *What helps all parties fulfil their side of the psychological contract and what prevents it?*

The companies that form the Group were committed to 'keeping their apprentices'. This commitment influenced the amount and type of energy that is put into the apprenticeship program and the ways in which BuildingCo understood its role in the fulfilment of the psychological contract.

“You look at the key people in this organisation; they’re all ex-trades people. So they’ve come from the ground up. That’s what we’re trying to promote. That’s what we show to them”  
(Training Manager).

There was a recognition of the fact that new apprentices often had “blurred views of what the expectations are in the workplace and making these clear” (HR Manager).

There was company recognition of the features of adolescence. The alignment between the apprentices’ expectations and the company’s expectations took about two years. “Our Training Managers are well aware of the foibles of young adolescent males” (Training Manager) who often displayed the characteristics of adolescents making the transition to adulthood with all the attendant identity problems.

The age of apprentices was a factor to be considered in the fulfilment or otherwise of the psychological contract. “The experience collectively from the training managers is that 15 is a bit young. The more mature they are, if you give them a couple more years at school to mature everything seems to work better” (HR Manager). The apprentices who felt that the extra two years at school helped them to settle better to their apprenticeship also reiterated this. “If they leave in year 10 then they’d have to have a clear understanding of what they’re going to do. I think you miss a lot of things in those two years of learning. Even just maturing in the two years at school, like leadership wise” (Apprentice 1). The issue of age was aligned with the expressed difficulties of integrating the developmental changes occurring in young people’s lives across the crucial age bracket of 17 to 21.

The difficulty is integrating that in the workplace when there’s such a period of change. The thing is to get a competence in a trade or a profession you have to focus and you almost have to exclude other things to become competent in your area. So if you can work out a way of doing that then you stand a chance.  
(HR Manager)

The strategies used by BuildingCo to fulfil their side of the psychological contract were strongly influenced by the age of the apprentices. “I suppose the biggest challenge that we have is the generation we’re dealing with, the Generation Y, and getting into their heads and working out what they want. But I think I’ve put a good lid on that at the moment and we’ve kept a good loyalty system” (Training Manager). For these reasons both the managers and the apprentices valued pre apprenticeships and saw that these helped to inform the young people about what to expect from a particular industry. Pre apprenticeships provided the young people with an understanding of the industry and the expectations of the workplace. They learnt that there was structured and supervised learning to be done and that be “it hot or cold you’re out there. If you get them cold off the street the attrition rate is huge” (Training Coordinator).

Understanding the lives and aspirations of the apprentices was seen as being important in providing them with the support and guidance that was necessary. This has entailed using new forms of communication such as Facebook to maintain contact with the apprentices. The dimensions of the psychological contract that the company was committed to now had to be expressed in different ways using different technologies. This has required some adaptations on the part of the Training Managers as they moved from ‘pen and paper’ to mobile phones, email and Facebook.

I (Training Manager) have to try and use their stimulus or their trigger points that actually make them tick over. You’ve got to adapt with them and give them a father figure support to guide them through because at the end of the day our ultimate goal is retention. We pick the fruit once they finish their time.

The role of the Training Manager was sometimes a delicate dance. They were the brokers between the apprentices and the host employer in the particular building company. “It can be a point of conflict because the Training Manager will be pushing, giving work to the host trainer, and the company supervisor might have other relationships and priorities with his wider trade base, so managing that can be quite tricky at times” (HR Manager).

To support the seven Training Managers and the host trainers the company had set up electronic and phone networks for purposes of liaison and mutual learning and problem solving. This in turn helped to support the development of the apprentices on site.

Family background and the availability of good role models were regarded as being important to the fulfilment of the psychological contract. If a member of the apprentice’s family had been working in this trade then it was likely that the apprentice would have a personal and historical sense of the expectations of the industry and the employer. If it was also the case that the apprentice assisted with the work then again their expectations were likely to be grounded in experience rather than imagination. However, there were family situations that interfered with the development of the psychological contract. Colloquially referred to as ‘parents from hell’; their effects could be very intrusive. “We’ve had an apprentice have to put a restraining order on his mother to keep her out of

it. Because she's in there causing trouble, she's offending the host trainer and she's ringing up everyone at various levels in the company" (Training coordinator).

BuildingCo recognised the importance of placing apprentices with an appropriate onsite trainer. "If there's a really good match and everyone's happy and they're with a good trainer we don't swap them" (Training Coordinator).

The Human Resources strategies used in the company were designed to reinforce the terms of the psychological contract and the mutual responsibilities involved over the period of the apprenticeship. In the induction process there was a recognition that a 'one shot in the arm' was not enough. This recognition of the initial information overload had resulted in the development of strategies to reinforce the obligations and expectations. One strategy used in the induction process was the distribution of key telephone numbers and contacts that an apprentice may need during the period of employment. These were given out in the sign up pack and if there was a problem with safety or the Training Manager for instance the apprentice could make easy contact with the appropriate person.

Similarly the system of probationary reviews in the company was intensive with these occurring at the two-week, the six-week and the ten-week milestones. These occurred on site and the aim was to ensure that "the kid knows what to do and the on site trainer knows what to do. They are building a three year relationship. You're going to see each other more than your family so let's get it right" (Training Manager). At the end of the non government funded Probationary Period of three months a decision was made to either sign up the apprentice or not. "That holds off on the government incentives. So we don't receive any money until that mark is activated" (Training Manager). If the Training manager felt that the potential apprentice needs more time to demonstrate competence and commitment the probationary period was extended to six months.

Remuneration was another critical factor in the psychological contract. There were a variety of opinions about the appropriate level of remuneration for apprentices and apprentice attitudes towards remuneration levels. At one extreme apprentices had a sense of delayed gratification and accepted that the wages would be low for the period of their apprenticeship. "I wouldn't work harder if I got paid more money. I just work normally. What you get paid is what you get paid because in the end you're going to get the money that you want anyway and while you're learning it's OK" (Apprentice 1). This apprentice had the role models of older members of his family who were in the same trade.

Creating a strong identity with the company helped apprentices to feel included and clear about their positions and roles. This in turn added to the successful fulfilment of the psychological contract. "In inductions John will always talk about the apprentice program, what the vision for the future is, what our core values are. So sort of tell a story to make it a little bit clearer that they are part of a successful company that also part of a successful group" (HR Manager).

### *What is the impact of a fulfilled versus a breached psychological contract?*

In this company there was a probationary period for the apprentices of three months prior to the sign up. The Training Manager had the responsibility at the end of the three months to either recommend retention or a cancellation within the probationary time. "Once they've come out of that time then there is an expectation that we will work with them and we've got to try and get the best outcome for both them and us" (Training Coordinator). A fulfilled contract meant good tradespeople and a supply of labour for the companies in this building group.

Lack of punctuality, incorrectly filled in time sheets and other breaches were treated leniently in the first instance and the training manager would work with the apprentice to remedy the problem. 'It's not like you don't turn up and you're sacked' (Training Coordinator). The company had a reputation for 'being a little bit more lenient than other people' (Training Manager) in the case of breaches on the part of an apprentice. They would begin with counselling and conversation. It was collaborative and ongoing. It was predicated on the principles of performance management and it was used in the early stages of a problem. It is a 'knock on the door and let us know before it becomes too hard' (Training Manager) philosophy. If the problem persisted then the Training Manager would try and place the apprentice with another host trainer and evaluate the reasons for the breakdown. In the case of a persistent breach the Training Manager involved would contact the Apprentice Centre and a mediator would be nominated. The process was one of performance management used at an early stage in the breach.

I get them involved and try to coach them (the apprentices) through. We set goals. I still use it as a warning letter. We have areas for improvement. We clearly outline what they need to do. Then they know, okay, we've done something wrong. I need to improve on this. A bit like a notice at

work. We show them where they've gone wrong and give them the opportunity to speak up.  
(Training Manager)

If this process failed the Training Manager would explicitly lay out the alternatives: dismissal or improved performance. "If you honestly don't want to be here and you've talked with other apprentices we'll work it through. So if we give the right guidance through as a father figure or whatever, hopefully they'll stay onboard. If they don't there's nothing we can do" (Training Manager).

### *How can the mutual expectations be made clearer?*

A number of participants felt that expectations could be made clearer at earlier stages. For instance work needed to be done back in the schools. Careers Advisers needed higher exposure to the trades and a better understanding of the expectations embedded in these trades. If work experience was better-organised and structured from the point of the school then it was likely that young people would receive a more accurate picture of the expectations associated with the particular trades. "We ended up being a dumping ground. So we got a bit smarter and said we'll not take anyone who hasn't actually explicitly said they're interested in a construction trade and we interview them before we commit to have them onsite" (Training Coordinator).

The HR Manager and the Training Manager both felt that the mutual expectations could be made clearer if this possible employment pathway was promoted more enthusiastically. Aligned with this a number of participants felt that politicians needed to be better informed and better able to advocate for apprenticeships in the various trades. In these ways the sometimes negative influences of the media could be counteracted and decisions about apprenticeships could be made on the basis of better quality information.

## Conclusion and key findings

BuildingCo had a long history of high quality workmanship, and a long history of training apprentices. Recently it had altered its company structure to form a Building Group that included the creation of an internal RTO. This new training structure was a response to the shortage of apprentices and the need to 'grow their own' labour supply for the building and construction industry. The ethos of BuildingCo and the fact that its owners had come from traditional trades created a strong commitment to providing the conditions for success for apprentices and an explicit articulation of the company's 'promises' in the development and implementation of the psychological contract. These 'promises' had their practical expression in attentive HR procedures such as recruitment, induction, mentoring, supervision and performance management. The Training Managers had a crucial role to play in the fulfilment of the psychological contract through the enculturation of the apprentices, through mediation between apprentices and employers and other stakeholders, and through the mentoring and coaching of employers and workplace supervisors.

# Case study - PowerCo

## Introduction and overview of apprenticeship and traineeship programs

This case study was carried out in PowerCo, a government-owned electricity distribution corporation in Queensland covering regional and remote areas. The research was undertaken in a northern Queensland coastal city that was an area headquarters for the organisation and where the company's apprentice co-ordinator was located. The company was responsible for operation of sub-stations, delivery of electricity from the substation to the consumer, and also operated stand-alone power stations in remote areas. The company placed an overwhelming emphasis on safety which was first amongst its stated values, which were: safety, professionalism, integrity, respect, innovation and teamwork.

PowerCo employed 4500 people of which 340 were apprentices. The company considered it had a responsibility as a 'corporate citizen' to maintain a strong apprenticeship program. PowerCo's apprentices worked as distribution linesperson/electrical powerline linesperson (about 70% were in this category), systems electricians/electrical fitter mechanics, and communications technicians, with much smaller numbers of non-electrical trades sheet-metal worker, fitter and turner, diesel fitter, and boiler maker. The case study focuses on the first three occupations. The company also offered traineeships, some of which were outside the VET system at associate degree level, but which included electrical system designers at Certificate IV level. The company was also looking at customer service traineeships for its call centres. However, traineeships were not covered in this case study.

PowerCo had an enterprise RTO which undertook the linesperson apprentice training and some other training. Apprentices in the other trades were trained by other RTOs, primarily TAFE. The training was undertaken in block modes of four to six weeks at a time; apprentices returned home every second weekend. Enterprise RTO also trained apprentices from other companies; external clients provided about half of its business.

PowerCo had experienced recruitment difficulties into its apprentice program at the height of the mining boom in particular and had therefore stepped up its marketing and recruitment processes, increased pay for adult apprentices and started a major indigenous recruitment program. The average age of a commencing apprentice was the early 20s, although it was reported that there was a swing back towards school leavers. Some apprentices were existing workers who had started as power workers and were often mature-aged; they were required to pass an aptitude test. In total about 55% of the first-year apprentices were aged over 21. At the time of the case study around 75 people were recruited each year from an applicant pool of between 1200 and 2000 (including internal applicants). The recruitment process provided the company with a number of 'nearly successful' people whose names were handed onto the State ITAB, as 'preferred apprentices' whose names were made available, with their agreement, to other employers. There was an annual recruitment round which consisted of an on-line application form, an on-line aptitude test which according to one of the apprentices interviewed focused on literacy and numeracy, an assessment centre - including a teamwork exercise - in a regional centre, and an interview with a panel including a work area representative. Perhaps because of this stringent recruitment process there was a completion rate of around 96%.

## Research method

The interviews took place over one day in June 2010 at two of the company sites in the city, one an administrative office and the other a field operations centre. Interviews took between 21 and 49 minutes, with the majority lasting over 30 minutes. A detailed interview protocol was utilised, in common with the other case studies. All except one of interviews were taped, with permission, and transcribed. They were then analysed to draw out themes.

**Table 5 Interviews: PowerCo**

Interview Number	Job title	Gender	Age	Approx length of time with company
1	Area Operations manager (formerly manager of vocational programs including apprenticeships)	M	-	15 years
2	Apprentice co-ordinator	M	-	8 years
3	Regional field officer	M	-	1 year
4	Workgroup leader	M	Mid 30s	Nearly 5 years
5	First year apprentice, systems electrician	M	18	4 months
6	Trainee, Cert III and Cert IV in business	F	25	18 months plus 1 year maternity leave
7	Program co-ordinator enterprise RTO	F	-	

## Findings

### *What are the promises in the psychological contract?*

The following promises on the part of the employer were mentioned. The managerial, supervisory and apprentice unit staff's view is presented first, and then the apprentices' views.

Company view:

- Provide a full range of working experiences to complete the apprenticeship;
- Provide a safe workplace and protective clothing;
- Pay them properly and meet employment conditions;
- Make it very clear to the candidates what the jobs were like;
- Appoint only people who would be suitable for the work;
- Provide a good environment for learning;
- Provide good off-the-job training;
- Manage and monitor the apprentice's progress through his/her apprenticeship;
- Offer the apprentices a permanent job when they finish, if possible;
- Provide a qualification that will set them up for working life;
- For internal applicants, provide a chance to achieve better pay at the end of the apprenticeship and better career options; a guaranteed permanent job at the end of the apprenticeship.

Apprentices' view:

- Provide a safe working environment;
- Provide a secure job for four years;
- Teach the apprentice everything he/she needs to know;
- Provide tools and personal protective equipment (PPE);
- Employ tradesmen who would instruct correctly;
- Help apprentices get through the apprenticeship;
- Provide further career opportunities.

Both mentioned that they knew they were not guaranteed a permanent job at the end of their apprenticeship as it depended on vacancies being available, but that they hoped they would get one.

The following were considered to be the obligations of the apprentice; again the company view is followed by the apprentices' view.

Company view:

- Be willing to learn and proactive in learning;
- Be willing to follow direction;
- Work safely;

- Work in a team;
- Adhere to company values;
- Work professionally;
- Turn up for off the job training, study and pass exams;
- Turn up for work;
- Adhere to the company code of conduct;
- Fulfil the training contract;
- Consider staying with the company when completed.

Apprentices' view:

- Remain safe at all times, wear PPE , 'don't do anything stupid';
- Listen to instructions;
- Remain vigilant;
- Learn as much as they can;
- 'Don't abuse the privilege you have been given';
- Honour what the company's provided;
- Turn up for work;
- Do not be slack;
- Let the field officer know if there were any problems.

In terms of the psychological contract related to formal training the expectation from the company and the RTO was that the apprentice would complete his/her certificate, complete training workbooks, and very importantly to complete the training log book which was essential to finish the apprenticeship. They were also expected, as the internal RTO's programs co-ordinator put it, to 'behave properly when they're at training and in their accommodation' as they were housed while on block training. The apprentices expected to be taught properly but considered their on-the-job training more important, however the female apprentice thought TAFE was important to 'get a basic understanding'. The apprentices seemed not to contact their RTOs between blocks; if they assistance with workbooks and logbooks they would consult textbooks or ask a manager or colleagues at work.

### *Literacy and numeracy expectations*

The expectation of all parties was that literacy and numeracy demands of the training and the job would be high. The area operations manager said that the selection process enabled people with major difficulties to be removed before appointment. Numeracy was a particular issue and in the past PowerCo had used WELL training. However according to the area operations manager it was more of an issue when they were struggling to get good candidates. He said that now they were able to employ only 'people who are confident, and have the abilities to do the trade training'. Within the general program, different apprenticeships required different levels; for example system electrician needed good maths and English at year 12 level. The workgroup leader said

Apprenticeships aren't easy to do these days, there's a lot of theory involved. I guess that's why they pick people, high school leavers, they're graduates at school and stuff like that. So I guess it's to study; it's like doing a uni degree now, isn't it?

The male apprentice confirmed that the academic requirements were quite tough. He described his first block thus:

We did exams every couple of days, I think we did about eight exams in two weeks. Also filled out a report, a 600 word report on how solar electricity is made and that sort of stuff. So there was a fair bit of writing I guess, but at the same time there was a lot of just verbal, talking about it, running through.

The communications electrician had a university degree in science, and the other had been offered a university place to study engineering but declined it. So while they did not find the training overly demanding, they noted that fellow learners in their groups had experienced difficulty.

### *How is the psychological contract developed within the workplace, for all parties?*

The psychological contract began to be developed well before appointment. The stringent recruitment process described in the introduction established high expectations and also made the apprentices feel that they were lucky to get the job. Also as PowerCo was large and well-known



there was a high public awareness of the nature of apprenticeship with the company. The male apprentice for example had friends who worked for PowerCo. The female apprentice had two family members that were apprentices. The apprentice co-ordinator noted that they tried to recruit the right people; not simply the best: 'If we take too much of the top of the market, we generally find that those people may not be challenged enough in the apprenticeship.'

Discussion of expectations formed a large part of the induction process, which took four weeks. The male apprentice mentioned that the induction confirmed his choice of employer:

Yeah it is good. I'm sitting in a classroom and they're going through all this stuff, I'm thinking, oh I'm really glad I got into this place. Because I was talking to some friends they were on half the pay rate, no tools, got to buy your own stuff and that must make it really hard.

The induction process was also said to incorporate interactive days where workgroup leaders come in and work with apprentices. Thus apprentices could understand the workgroup leaders' perspective and the workgroup leaders understood their role in the fulfilment of mutual expectations. However, one respondent said that workgroup leaders no longer attended these sessions.

Comparisons with apprentices working for other companies provide a reinforcement of commitment to the company. The male apprentice, for example, described his experiences with apprentices from other companies at the TAFE block training:

They're all from private entities and all domestic electricians and they've got short shorts, short shirts, a pair of normal sunnies. Whereas we've got like [company] sunnies, long clothes, thick clothes and all that sort of stuff. So it makes you feel a lot safer straight up.

The apprentices also recounted instances of other apprentices that they knew who were treated badly by their employers.

Regular quarterly reports were completed on each apprentice by supervisors, workgroup leaders and the apprentices themselves. This process reminded all of the level of mutual commitment and ensured that standards of work and provision of training were regularly checked.

The company committed only to offer a permanent job where performance was satisfactory and there were vacancies in appropriate areas. However this obligation was taken seriously. The area operations manager said:

One of the things that I do is at the beginning of the year for all of the fourth year apprentices, I have a meeting with them with their work group leaders and we go through those things about this is your final year of your apprenticeship. This is the time to consolidate your trade skills, to develop your professional ability in conducting trade work and at the end of this there is a job waiting for you if all those things are matched. So we go through those things and open the forum up about what are things that you think have been missing or that you still need to achieve that you have got some concern about? Some of the things that you might like to look at in your final year that might be outside the scope of your apprenticeship but of value to you and of value to the organisation.

### *What impacts do RTOs, intermediary organisations and other stakeholders have on the construction of the psychological contract?*

The area operations manager saw the psychological contract as being a three-way arrangement, between the apprentice, the employer and the RTO. The broader relationships were with the ITAB, government departments, and consultative groups within PowerCo. He considered that the strong relationships among these strengthened the psychological contract. PowerCo dealt with 11 RTOs including its internal RTO; most of the external RTOs were TAFE colleges. The greatest concern about the RTOs according to the apprenticeship co-ordinator was inconsistency among them. The field officers visited the RTOs regularly to try to prevent inconsistencies and ensure that the RTO was making the apprentices adhere to PowerCo standards in relation to dress, for example.

Only the internal RTO was accessed for interview. The internal RTO had three centres used for apprentice training, in different parts of the State. The RTO was confined primarily to training delivery; between-session training queries would normally be made to the field officer rather than to the RTO.

The apprentices had formal logbooks which were required to be signed off in order to complete their apprenticeship. The workgroup leader said

Most of the apprentices we've had, they're not young guys they're sort of 30-odd and their logbooks are unbelievable. There's photos and whole pages about one job and stuff like that; they're really good. I didn't do that when I was an apprentice but I did my apprenticeship when I was 17, so the last thing I wanted to do was a logbook.

The apprentice co-ordinator noted that following through the off-the-job training with practice on the job was vitally important. One of the apprentices was disappointed that a TAFE teacher had told his class-group that he was not obliged to teach the apprentices, just to supervise them. The apprentice was evidently rather taken aback by this.

*What helps all parties fulfil their side of the psychological contract and what prevents it?*

It helped that the company was large and able to rotate the apprentices around, and also that it could afford to offer its apprentices free of charge out to other companies to get their domestic experience - this met the promise of a broad base of experiences and training. However the large size of the company had its disadvantages, as the contract was fulfilled through a range of people, not all of whom had the same level of commitment. It was vitally important that those responsible for signing off logbooks, for example, were committed to the process. The company was very aware of the issue and had set up a number of processes to ensure that people understood their role. 'Every truck', as it was put, had a copy of the requirements for supervising apprentices and what apprentices were and were not allowed to do at the different stages of their training. There were also mentoring documents on the internal web site.

It helped that many tradesmen and work group leaders had done their own training at PowerCo. At the least it helped that they had all done an electrical apprenticeship. The area operations manager said 'There is nothing in our values or the expected behaviours of us as employers that's different from a lot of other organisations.'

Field officers were important players in the system. Each had responsibility for around 50 apprentices in a geographic area. They acted much like GTO field officers in monitoring progress and dealing with any difficulties between the apprentice and the workgroup leader or the apprentice and the RTO. A positive communication style was important. As the apprentice co-ordinator said:

XXX [field officer] has got a very good way with workgroup leaders. He has the theory that, you know, you're going to attract more people with honey than you are with vinegar. So he goes out of his way to work in with the apprentice and work in with the workgroup leaders and it is really successful.

The field officer also worked with the workgroup leaders to improve their training focus.

PowerCo gave the apprentice co-ordinator and field officers 'a pretty free rein' and they were well resourced with administrative staff, according to the apprentice co-ordinator. However one respondent suggested that the availability of support structures for apprentices could lead to a 'pass the parcel' type situation. This respondent said, speaking of workplace supervisors,

Sometimes I think as soon as you mention the word 'apprentice', they just think, vocational programs (the company department which included both apprenticeship co-ordination and the internal RTO), we'll deal with it; when it's something that probably should be dealt with internally. You get that a lot. That's just an apprentice and they just go, someone else deal with it; whereas if it was a situation with one of their other guys, they would deal with it themselves.

The availability of resources also meant that a great deal of money and time could be spent on the recruitment process. It could be very rigorous, and so only apprentices likely to fulfil their side of the contract needed to be appointed; the available pool was widened by an enterprise agreement which provided high rates of pay for mature-aged apprentices and the movement of under-21s onto that pay scale when they reached the age of 21. Internal applicants continued on their normal rate of pay until qualified; they did not move onto apprentice rates. Recruitment of trades assistants who were often mature people who 'know the business inside out' (and knew what happened to apprentices) added to the easy fulfilment of the psychological contract. The workgroup leader interviewed said that quite a large number entered via that route. Also these apprentices were already highly committed to the company and to moving onwards within the company.

Quite simple, but resource-intensive, factors helped to cement the psychological contract. One apprentice mentioned that he liked the fact that the company paid above the award rate:

It makes me feel that they really want you, and to try as hard as you can and actually be dedicated to your job, remain safe at all times.

Interestingly the female apprentice mentioned that simply getting paid to learn was a bonus as she had previously completed a university course where she had to pay to learn. The tools that the apprentices were given were over and above requirements, and this was mentioned by several respondents. The male apprentice mentioned that expectations had been exceeded: for example he

had not previously known about some of the financial benefits such as sub-station allowance, and provision of extra clothing.

Flexibility was also important in keeping faith with apprentices. PowerCo was understanding with apprentices who needed time off either during the apprenticeship or after completion. It was reported that many times graduated apprentices went away to travel or to work for another company and came back after a few years. The female apprentice had had an extended amount of time off after having a baby, well above what her entitlement would have been, and was now back completing her time.

People-related problems sometimes made the fulfilment of the contract difficult. Within the workgroup, the leader was required to place the apprentices with different tradesmen. This created some difficulties because of personality clashes. The workgroup leader said

I think you find that everywhere, personality clashes. Everyone's working in a male-dominated area and everyone's got egos that clash.

Another common problem was that supervisors were often unwilling to provide explicit and honest feedback about shortcomings in the quarterly evaluations. Yet this was important so that a performance improvement plan could be instituted by the field officer.

### *What is the impact of a fulfilled versus a breached psychological contract?*

The company had a very high completion rate. Generally if an apprentice left it was said that it was because there was a difference between his or her values and those of the company, ie the agreement to abide by company values had been breached. The area operations manager thought that 'the majority of people have good intent and go about doing their job really well.' Other interviewees reflected this view. The male apprentice said that he was very happy at PowerCo and that the type of thing that would make him feel like quitting would be:

If I felt that I wasn't getting anywhere, I wasn't being trained properly wasn't being shown anything, just being told to sweep the floor everyday or something like that. The only other thing would be if I saw or was involved in a big accident or something like that, that really brought it home that I shouldn't be here. But other than that, I don't think anything else would make me quit.

Clearly the obligations of the company to the apprentice were generally fulfilled and exceeded. It seemed that apprentices also generally met their obligations. Where the apprentices exceeded expectations, the workgroup leader said that particularly good performance was recorded in the quarterly reports and congratulations were provided at team meetings. Also, nominations could also be made to the internal PowerCo 'apprentice of the year' and State awards.

Where expectations were not being met from the apprentice side then the workgroup leader would record the fact in the quarterly report and provide 'a slap on the wrist'; if there was no improvement the workgroup leader would report it to his or her manager. The field officer would also pick up on it in his scrutiny of the reports. According to the male apprentice, if an apprentice did the wrong thing at work he would 'get E-safed', which was the term used for a safety breach that had to be reported. It appeared that most things could be interpreted as safety issues, so 'E-safing' was applied to a range of minor misdemeanours.

Problems with the formal training could lead to the apprentice being behind with his/her logbook completion. This meant the apprenticeship could not be completed because the capstone assessment task could not be completed without this. It was seen as a joint responsibility of the RTO and the field officer to find a means for the apprentice to complete the log book.

Where expectations were not being met from the company side, the apprentice could speak to the field officer who had an official mentoring role. This did not seem to create any difficulties from the workgroup point of view. The workgroup leader said that because of the strong union tradition in PowerCo, it was accepted by line managers that workers could step outside the line management structure to try to rectify matters.

A substantial number of problems that were escalated to the central apprentice staff had to deal with were related to the workgroup leaders or supervisors not fulfilling their side of the psychological contract.

Sometimes it escalates and I think one of the things that we need to remember is that they're not XXX's apprentices and they're not YYY's apprentices; they're [PowerCo's] apprentices. That's one thing that we need to keep in mind all the time ... I didn't recruit them and YYY didn't - [PowerCo] recruited them. So they're everyone's responsibility. Even though we're responsible for monitoring them, everyone's responsibility is to train them and to give them that direction.

### *How can mutual expectations be made clearer?*

The male apprentice suggested that more information about mutual expectations could be placed on the company web site. Although everything was well explained at induction, he would have liked more information both while still in the application stage, and now as an employee, because a lot of the information about expectations was verbal.

The RTO co-ordinator suggested that there was room for improvements in internal communication about changes in personnel. Although apprentice information was available on the company's intranet, it seems that some people did not access it and when workgroup leaders moved around things got confused. Also she felt that face to face communication was important,

Whereas if you're just sending out correspondence, well you get hundreds of emails a day, some people, so it's just another email.

The apprentice co-ordinator said it was very difficult to communicate with DETA, the Queensland government department managing apprenticeships. Despite its large numbers of apprentices PowerCo had to use the same 1800 phone number as the general public, and its staff were not allowed directly to phone the DETA field officer who was in the same town. It also felt that as a company with many apprentices at remote sites the paperwork should be made easier, for example a minor change had to be initialised by the apprentice, the supervision and so on, and they might be working in very remote areas. While these might appear minor points, they could affect the company's relationships with its apprentices.

### Conclusion and key findings

This was a company with a long and proud tradition of training apprentices. The industry was heavily apprenticed; managers had come up through the ranks. These factors helped to ensure that those responsible generally had a strong commitment to ensuring the apprentices were trained well. The large size of the company assisted in some ways but in others created difficulties; apprentices could be provided with a wide range of experiences but on the other hand could get 'lost' for a while with a poor supervisor. The company had compensated for the latter problem by setting up a system almost like a GTO, appointing geographical area field officers with a caseload of around 50 people and with a quarterly reporting system involving the apprentice and his supervisor/workgroup leader. These practices were extremely resource-intensive but resulted in a high completion and retention rate. The other major factors which was also made possible by the resources available within the company were a highly selective recruitment procedure involving a number of different steps, and an enterprise agreement that provided a level of pay for mature-aged apprentices that was likely to attract high-quality applicants.

## Case study - Electrical RailCo

### Description of the organisation and overview of apprenticeship program

This case study was conducted with Electrical RailCo in Victoria. Electrical RailCo was a publicly listed major electrical contractor company. It had a presence in every State in Australia and were considered the oldest and largest electrical contractor company in Australia, having been established more than 100 years ago. The company worked across the electrical contracting industry including high voltage, rail signalling, commercial and industrial. Electrical RailCo was known as an approved contractor for various organisations and had a permanent presence in a number of manufacturing plants, including Ford, GMH, Carlton United Breweries, Nestle, and Cadbury Schweppes. In Victoria, Electrical RailCo currently employed about 250 staff, of which 24 were apprentices.

Electrical RailCo had an apprenticeship program for more than 20 years and over this time the recruitment and selection methods had been fine tuned. The exact number of apprentices taken on by the organisation each year fluctuated, depending on the economic climate and the amount of work the organisation had lined up for the following year, but generally six to eight apprentices were recruited per year. The recruitment process began towards the end of each year. Potential applicants who were interested in undertaking an apprenticeship with Electrical RailCo were asked to sit a pre-selection test with the National Electrical Communications Association (NECA). Applicants who obtained at least a 70% pass mark were considered for an interview. Approximately 30 applicants were interviewed and six to eight apprentices were then selected and appointed. The successful candidates commenced their apprenticeship in mid to late January of the following year.

The electrical apprenticeship was a four-year program. During the four years, the apprentices undertook on-the-job work experience under the supervision of a licensed electrician and blocks of study were completed with a registered training provider (RTO), being a TAFE college or a private RTO. The work involved calculations and understanding formulas, hence the apprentices were also expected to have obtained reasonable maths grades in years 11 and 12. Literacy and numeracy were not considered issues amongst the apprentices employed by Electrical RailCo and may be due to the stringent recruitment and selection methods employed by this organisation.

### Research method

The organisational interviews took place over one day in early July 2010. The apprentice manager was interviewed at the head office site in Melbourne. The project manager and apprentices were interviewed at one of the work sites, located in the CBD, Melbourne. The apprentice interviews were conducted as two group interviews. Three 1st and/or 2nd year apprentices were interviewed as one group and three 3rd and/or 4th year apprentices were interviewed in another group. An interview was also conducted with a representative from the RTO the following week. Interviewee characteristics are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6 Interviews: Electrical RailCo**

Interview Number	Job title	Organisation/Location	Gender	Age	Approx length of time with company
1	Apprentice Manager	Electrical RailCo head office	M	-	> 20 years
2	Project Manager	Electrical RailCo work site	M	-	> 10 years
3	Apprentice 1	Electrical RailCo work site	M	21	1.5 years
	Apprentice 2	Electrical RailCo work site	M	18	6 months
	Apprentice 3	Electrical RailCo work site	M	19	1.5 years
4	Apprentice 4	Electrical RailCo work site	M	20	2.5 years
	Apprentice 5	Electrical RailCo work site	M	22	2.5 years
	Apprentice 6	Electrical RailCo work site	M	22	3.5 years
5	Training Manager	Private RTO	M	-	2.5 years

The interviews took between 20 minutes and one hour, with most being about 40 minutes. A detailed interview protocol was used, common to all the case studies. Following interviewee consent, the interviews were taped, transcribed and then analysed to identify themes. Findings are reported according to the following six themes: The promises of the psychological contract; how the

psychological contract is developed; the impact of stakeholders on the psychological contract; what helps and prohibits fulfilment of the psychological contract; the impact of a fulfilled versus breached psychological contract; and how mutual expectations can be made clearer.

## Findings

### *What are the promises in the psychological contract?*

Electrical RailCo was committed to investing in their apprentices because the apprentices formed part of the current and future workforce and were also viewed as potential future managers. As the apprentice manager said.

When we conduct the interview we always make it clear to the applicants that we view them as future managers for our company and we want them to stay. We encourage them to stay.

Even if the apprentices chose to leave the organisation at the end of their apprenticeship, usually to go travelling, the company was “always sorry to see them go but the door was always open for them to return” at a later date.

Similarly, the apprentices appeared to be committed to Electrical RailCo. In comparison with other apprentices, the apprentices from Electrical RailCo believed they were paid well and also well taken care of by the company. For example, one apprentice said.

People that we go to trade school with for example, all of them work for smaller companies and they don't get paid anywhere near as well as we do. I suppose you feel a bit better, you feel like you're more needed I guess, because you get paid more.

The managers from Electrical RailCo believed the pay structure was generous for their apprentices. The apprentice rates of pay at Electrical RailCo were determined by an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement developed in conjunction with NECA. Some work sites also had a site allowance and apprentices and tradesmen at the various sites were paid the same site allowance.

The managers and apprentices at Electrical RailCo identified a number of reciprocal promises. These promises were either explicitly stated, or they were implied in statements and derived by the researcher.

The company's promises to their apprentices were identified by the managers as:

- Providing adequate education to help them obtain an A-grade licence;
- Giving them exposure to all facets of the industry; and
- Ensuring their health and safety.

The apprentices identified the company's promises as:

- Having a duty of care;
- Providing a safe working environment;
- Providing adequate training and education;
- Providing adequate pay; and
- Providing appropriate and adequate work

The apprentices' promises to the company were identified by the managers as:

- Working hard;
- Passing study modules;
- Following company procedures, especially in relation to OH&S;
- Being involved in the work site;
- Working safely;
- Being punctual;
- Being reliable; and
- Being honest.

The apprentices identified their promises to the company as:

- Being committed;
- Being punctual;

- Being reliable;
- Working hard;
- Willingness to learn;
- Following processes properly;
- Being professional;
- Following safety procedures; and
- Being good role models for newer apprentices.

Overall, both parties identified similar reciprocal employer and employee promises. On the employer side, similar promises identified by both parties related to training and education and health and safety. On the employee side, the similar promises related to commitment, punctuality, reliability, and following correct company processes and procedures.

### *How is the psychological contract developed within the workplace for all parties?*

Knowledge about the reciprocal expectations between the company and the apprentices appeared to start with the interview process where first impressions were formed. The managers referred to a concrete process where expectations were made clear, starting with the interview process. The apprentices spoke about how professional the company was at interview and about the commitment that they expected from their apprentices. One apprentice summed this up as follows.

From the first interview, you're sort of explained the different procedures that they have and even just things like the uniform and they come across as a professional company. They're going to provide for you but you have to put in as well and it came across from the very beginning.

The apprentices had also formed certain expectations about Electrical RailCo based on the company's reputation and marketing on various construction sites, for example one apprentice said.

They also manage some big projects and if you speak to people you learn the smaller companies don't get the bigger jobs like that and ODG do a lot of work on the big sites ... so you're thinking that a larger company is going to be more professional in the way they deal with their workers.

The apprentices and the apprentice manager spoke about how expectations were made clear both verbally and in written form during the one-day induction that all the apprentices attended on their first day at work. Included in the one-day induction was a discussion about the company, the policies and procedures and the "cardinal safety rules that we expect all our people to abide by". Safety expectations in particular were emphasised, as noted by the apprentice manager.

They are given a work health and safety handbook, and we discuss it in detail and we ask them to sign the acknowledgement slip at the back of the handbook saying that they've read and understood it.

On the work sites, the apprentices used other employees as role models to learn about what to expect from the company and also to know what the company expected from them. As noted by two apprentices.

You just watch the way other people handle themselves as a tradesman. You don't just learn how to do electrical work, (you) learn how to hold yourself as well I guess.

On the first day of the job when you meet your colleagues and that, your work mates, you figure out they're into it. They're switched on and they're committed to what they do ... and you think, okay I need to be a good electrician to make it through, I've got to be more like them.

On work sites the apprentices also spoke about being looked after by their more experienced colleagues who would "make sure you're doing everything the right way. They always ask - you right? Any questions just ask me. They're always basically looking out for your back".

One manager commented that his expectations of apprentices were based on his own work ethic and that he expected apprentices to be committed to the job. This manager clarified expectations "by telling them what's expected, by pointing out where they might be falling down and trying to be positive in their encouragement but firm in what is required".

The apprentices also spoke about being given more responsibility once they had demonstrated to the company that they were able to meet expectations and the company had confidence in them. For example, one apprentice said.

You kind of start doing nothing jobs. As you go along, you start to feel like a bit more of an asset to the company and start to really want to show that you've learnt a lot. That you can be responsible in terms of working by yourself and you're not going to do anything stupid.

### *What impacts do RTOs, intermediary organisations and other stakeholders have on the construction of the psychological contract?*

There appeared to be two primary stakeholders who influenced the reciprocal expectations that formed between Electrical RailCo and their apprentices: Parents and RTOs. The organisation in particular viewed parents as an important stakeholder and facilitated parents' involvement in the apprenticeship, starting with the interview stage. The company insisted that at least one parent attend the interview with the apprentice applicant much to the surprise of some parents.

There were three main reasons for the company involving parents in the apprenticeship. Firstly, it was important to Electrical RailCo that the parents understood what the company was about. There was also a lot of information covered during the interview and parents would have the opportunity to review and clarify this information with the applicant at a later stage and potentially influence the expectations of the prospective apprentice. Finally, Electrical RailCo was of the belief that if any problems arose during the apprenticeship these could be easily resolved because the company could contact the parents, having already met them at interview.

Electrical RailCo also believed that parents held certain expectations of the company in relation to occupational health and safety. The health and safety expectations of parents could in turn influence those of the apprentices. The apprentices also acknowledged that their upbringing influenced their work ethic and attitudes towards the job.

RTOs were important stakeholders because they provided the necessary technical and mathematical training required for the job. For apprentices this was important because what they learnt in theory they could later apply on the job. However, some of the apprentices felt that the RTO resources were inadequate and needed updating.

For Electrical RailCo, establishing a good working relationship with the RTO was important. The company were also selective about their RTOs and had established good communication channels with three preferred RTOs (two TAFEs and a private provider) regarding the learning progress of their apprentices. According to the apprentice manager, these preferred RTOs were chosen by Electrical RailCo "because they have good reporting processes and because they have good scholastic outcomes".

The private RTO working closely with Electrical RailCo also acknowledged the importance of establishing a good working relationship with the company and viewed the working relationship as a "partnership". The RTO representative explained.

I get the same worth back. I can go to (the) organisation and talk to their apprentices as a whole ... if one of them falters a little bit, I can quickly say to that person, well look I'll set up a discussion with you and me and (the organisation) ... this is what we expect so we're both on the same wavelength.

Other stakeholders were also mentioned by the parties and included NECA, peers and partners. NECA played a role in terms of the award rates of pay and also in the recruitment and selection processes. Peers potentially influenced the expectations of apprentices by recounting personal experiences and like parents; partners also had a vested interest in the health and safety of apprentices.

### *What helps all parties fulfil their side of the psychological contract and what prevents it?*

Providing adequate training and opportunities for apprentices allowed the company to fulfil their side of the psychological contract and also ensured appropriate reciprocal commitment and fulfilment of obligations from the apprentices. As one manager said.

Our apprentices are important to our future and I think that (Electrical RailCo) as an organisation goes out of its way to ensure that they're on the right jobs and they are given a lot of knowledge.

The company rotated their apprentices regularly to ensure they received adequate exposure to all facets of the industry. In addition, Electrical RailCo believed that their apprentices were offered a decent career path as well as the opportunity to "earn really good money". On the other hand, the apprentices appreciated the good on-the-job training that enabled them to perform adequately in the field.

The existing positive culture and having positive role models also helped the apprentices to fulfil their promises to the company. If the apprentices did not meet the expectations of the workgroup they would be taken to task by work colleagues and could be "ostracised from (the) working group ... as a



form of justice”. The longer the apprentices worked with a particular work group, the easier it was to follow the culture, as one apprentice noted.

Over time you get used to it and it sort of becomes like a second nature. You don't have to think about (things like) being on time and that because it just happens.

The company provided numerous examples of how they emphasised the explicitness of the psychological contract to their apprentices. One instance was during the formal one-day induction, where reciprocal expectations were made clear, both verbally and in written form. The apprentices also acknowledged that it was helpful to know what was expected from them. Similarly, if issues were perceived with a particular apprentice, Electrical RailCo would take the initiative in addressing the issues in a timely manner. The apprentice manager said.

Sometimes an apprentice is brought in here and sat down and we'll have a chat to him. Sometimes it's not very pleasant because we spell the rules out.

The provision of adequate resources and facilities was another method by which Electrical RailCo could fulfil its promises to their apprentices. For example, one apprentice noted “it's good to come to work and you might need a drill and it's good to know that you've got three drills there”. If facilities were perceived to be inadequate, then the company would compensate the apprentices by paying a site allowance. One manager explained.

This site is probably one of the sites where the conditions are a little bit below what you would normally accept but they get paid a little bit extra. There's a site allowance on this site because it's not as good as some sites could be so the only way that they can be compensated is financially and they are quite happy to put up with that.

Electrical RailCo has a “mentoring approach” in providing support and pastoral care to their apprentices. The managers had “an open door policy” and viewed the apprentices as “part of the family”. If the apprentices experienced any issues, they could ring the apprentice manager at any time. Managers also took responsibility for apprentices working on their site, for example.

We check with all the tradespeople and the site people that they work with to make sure that they're going where they're meant to go and that they are getting adequate care and training.

In return, the apprentices were appreciative of the support they received and acknowledged that they were well looked after by the company. The apprentices also acknowledged the extent to which Electrical RailCo worked to ensure a safe working environment for their apprentices. This was provided through support, help, supervision and safe work practices. As noted in the following comments by two apprentices.

As an apprentice ... you need to be sort of under supervision with certain things you do. That shows us that they're actually putting time into making rules to keep their apprentices safe and sort of help them out and stuff like that through their whole apprenticeship.

There's always help there and there's management who can always help... we're always taught if ever you feel unsafe doing something, not to do it. If it's not safe, don't work on it or if the power point is on or something, always make sure it's isolated. You can always ask someone to help you with that. Whereas if you were working by yourself or you're pushed into it, you tend to work not safely and that's when accidents happen.

The apprentices also reciprocated fulfilment of the psychological contract by demonstrating commitment and positive citizenship behaviours to Electrical RailCo. One apprentice said.

If you get looked after you're going to put your neck out for them sometimes. A couple of times you need to get something done by the end of the day and ... you do a bit of overtime here and there (even if) you don't get paid for it. Every now and then that sort of thing happens.

From the RTOs perspective, having clear communication channels with the company helped to ensure that expectations were being met. For example, the RTO representative said.

If a kid turns up here an hour late, there's no song and dance about it ... it's reported straight back to the employer because that's our commitment to the employer. They're employing this person. We just tell them what they do. So if they say, oh I slept in - that's what goes back. Oh got a hangover couldn't get out of bed - that's what goes back.

Explicitness about the reciprocal expectations between the RTO and the apprentices also ensured fulfilment of the psychological contract. According to the RTO representative, the apprentices were quite upfront and vocal about what their expectations were. However, if expectations were perceived to be unrealistic then this was also addressed, for example.

I encourage them to talk to me ... I also put their expectations (into perspective) of where it's got to be ... sometimes they're unreal but sometimes we can work through that.

If the psychological contract was prevented from being fulfilled, it was generally due to the vulnerability of the economy and the impact of the recent GFC. The apprentice manager explained.

If economic times are really tough, sometimes companies like ourselves (don't) employ any apprentices from GTOs because the economic climate (is) really bad, like last year... they might be asked to take holidays, they might be asked to do additional studies, but they can't be placed because there's no host company. That's a real downside and that can happen.

### *What is the impact of a breached versus a fulfilled psychological contract?*

When the psychological contract was perceived to have been met or exceeded by both parties, the result was often reward and/or recognition. For example, over the last four years, Electrical RailCo had had an apprentice nominated for the NECA apprentice of the year awards. This was perceived as good publicity for the company. The company were also keen to retain these apprentices as they were perceived as future managers.

The apprentices acknowledged that Electrical RailCo sometimes provided the opportunity and financial support for further training and/or study. For example, one apprentice said.

A guy in my year got paid to do a business course at TAFE or an engineering course or something like that. I don't think that a lot of employers would give you that opportunity.

The impact of further opportunities was "it makes you feel that you're not just another worker ... because they're investing in you" and resulted in increased loyalty to the company.

For the apprentices, a fulfilled psychological contract on the side of the employer meant increased job satisfaction. It also resulted in increased citizenship behaviours on the part of the apprentices who appeared willing to accommodate their workplace, particularly in relation to working overtime. As one apprentice said.

Doing overtime is optional in a way. Working on weekends that's up to you so pretty much you working on weekends is committing yourself to helping them out; even though you're getting paid for it, it's a choice you make to do it. You don't have to do it.

Electrical RailCo also recognised that by investing in their apprentices, the apprentices were willing and able to promote the reputation of the company as an apprentice employer of choice. For example, one manager noted.

Just last week my third year apprentice over at the Telstra site went back to (his school) and did a talk on how he's finding his apprenticeship and how he's doing it. He spent the day there talking to the young men that potentially want to move into the electrical field for a trade and he's been invited back. That was the third time I think that he's been back to talk about his apprenticeship. It's good marketing in that school environment.

On the other hand, when the psychological contract was perceived to have been breached by either party it often resulted in one party being "disappointed" or feeling "disillusioned" with the other.

Punctuality, in particular, was perceived to be important in the company and a lack of punctuality resulted in a negative impact on tight timelines and on the work crew in general. One apprentice noted.

Being consistently late (can have) a really bad effect on people giving you a go at having certain amounts of responsibility. You notice that some kids do just get lost in the company and they just aren't really given a chance after they haven't really tried.

### *How can mutual expectations be made clearer?*

Both Electrical RailCo and the apprentices felt that the reciprocal expectations between the parties were explicit and concrete. The apprentice manager said.

We do give them a lot of information. It's information overload. I mean they go away from that first interview with a better and a greater understanding of what lies ahead for them should they win an apprenticeship here with our company.

Similarly, the apprentices appeared to understand the benchmark criteria for meeting the expectations of Electrical RailCo and when asked if the expectations could be made any clearer, a typical response was "not really I don't reckon".

## Conclusion and key findings

Electrical RailCo has a well-developed apprenticeship program that has been finetuned over the last 20 years. It seems that the company's stringent recruitment and selection method had resulted in candidates of a high standard who were more likely to be invested in completing their apprenticeship. The encouragement of parents to also be involved in the apprenticeship program was novel and demonstrated recognition of the role stakeholders could play in the development of a psychological contract. It appeared that the psychological contract between Electrical RailCo and their apprentices was concrete and explicit in nature. This was evident through the similar perceptions held by Electrical RailCo and their apprentices in relation to the employer and employee promises of the psychological contract. The existing employees at Electrical RailCo were good role models for their apprentices, both in terms of learning about what to expect from Electrical RailCo and also what Electrical RailCo expected in return. The apprentices in this company acknowledged that they were supported and well looked after. The company was also willing to invest in the long-term future of their apprentices, and viewed them as potential future managers. In reciprocation, the apprentices demonstrated increased commitment and organisational citizenship behaviours towards Electrical RailCo.

## Case study - RetailCo

### Description of the organisation and overview of apprenticeship program

This case study was conducted with RetailCo, a discount variety retailer originally founded in the 1980s and with headquarters in Melbourne. The organisation had recently experienced rapid growth and at the time of the research had 200 stores across Australia in every State except, Northern Territory. The company had been listed on the Australian Stock Exchange since 2004. RetailCo employed approximately 3000 staff, of which more than 1000 had completed a traineeship program.

Prior to commencing a formal traineeship program about 10 years ago, RetailCo ran in-house training for their employees. Due to rapid growth and demand for training, RetailCo decided to offer formal traineeships that would provide their employees with a nationally recognised qualification. Over the last 10 years, RetailCo had developed long standing partnership with one RTO and continued to offer their traineeship programs with this RTO. The traineeship program originally only offered a Certificate III Retail but this had now expanded to also include Certificate II School Based, Certificate III Business Administration, Certificate III Warehousing and Distribution, and Certificate IV Retail Management. A new Diploma of Management also commenced in the year of the research, offered to senior managers through the Australian Institute of Management. All new store managers, whether recruited internally or externally, were strongly encouraged to participate in the Certificate training programs. Employees could either nominate themselves or be nominated by RetailCo managers for the certificate traineeship programs. Many of the trainees undertaking the traineeship programs had worked for RetailCo since they were at school.

The length of the certificate traineeship programs varied, depending on the number of modules to be completed and trainee availability to attend workshops. The minimum time for completion was approximately 12 months. The training combined on-the-job learning, whereby a RTO trainer visited the trainees in store, with off-site workshops held at the RTO in Melbourne. Trainees also completed set tasks in a workbook that was then assessed by the RTO trainer. In general, literacy and/or numeracy was not found to be a problem with RetailCo trainees.

### Research method

The case study interviews took place over four days in late July and early August 2010. The HR Manager and the Learning and Development Manager were interviewed at the head office site in Melbourne. One trainee and an Area Manager were interviewed at a RetailCo store in Geelong and another trainee and a Store Manager were interviewed at a RetailCo store in Ringwood. The interview with the RTO provider was conducted by telephone. Interviewee characteristics are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7 Interviews: RetailCo**

Interview Number	Job title	Organisation	Gender	Age	Approx length of time with company
1	HR Manager	RetailCo head office	M		> 10 years
2	L&D Manager	RetailCo head office	F		15 years
3	Area Manager	Geelong	M		14 years
4	Store Manager	Ringwood	M		2.5 years
5	Trainee 1	Geelong	M	23	6.5 years
6	Trainee 2	Ringwood	F	24	9 years
7	Training Manager	Private RTO	F		> 10 years

The interviews took between 20 and 30 minutes, with most being about 25 minutes. A detailed protocol was used, common to all the case studies. Following interviewee consent, the interviews were taped, transcribed and then analysed to identify themes. Findings are reported according to the following six themes: The promises of the psychological contract; how the psychological contract is developed; the impact of stakeholders on the psychological contract; what helps and prohibits fulfilment of the psychological contract; the impact of a fulfilled versus breached psychological contract; and how mutual expectations can be made clearer.

## *What are the promises of the psychological contract?*

Training was an important reciprocal obligation in this company and the managers reported that some employees came to work for RetailCo because of the training program offered to employees. RetailCo had built a strong, long-term relationship with their RTO over the last ten years, as noted by the HR manager.

We have been fortunate in that the relationship that we have (with the RTO) is a longstanding relationship and so we've got several of the people that work for us and several of the individual trainers who have worked with our trainees for years and years ... they have a personal attachment to our business and ... from the trainees perspective they perceive the person to be somebody who is working for us.

In conjunction with the RTO, RetailCo had also fine tuned its traineeship program and the expectations of all parties who played a role in the traineeship program seemed to be clear. For example, the RTO representative said.

We are always student focused ... our priority is that the students will get an outcome for themselves and that's a part of what our message is to them ... sometimes (the trainees) probably don't realise what they're being provided, the benefits ... and how (we) can assist them ... what we (expect) is for them to put in their 100 per cent and participate.

The trainees also seemed to value the traineeship program and the assistance they received in completing the certificate courses. One apprentice commented.

There were a lot of times where I had questions about the workbook and my trainer actually gave me her mobile to contact her whenever I wanted ... she took a personal responsibility to train me up ... I think that's really good.

Employees at RetailCo were all paid an enterprise agreement rate which was higher than the award rate of pay. In addition, employees and trainees received the same rate of pay in accordance with the job undertaken. Trainees were also paid an appropriate higher duty if they were in charge of a store at any given time. The trainees acknowledged that they were paid well and that pay provided positive reinforcement in RetailCo. For example, one trainee said.

I'm pretty well looked after as a manager. When I was part time and full time the rates were a lot better than say the competition like Kmart. I was getting a lot more as a 16 year old than my friends were working at Kmart ... it does provide a bit more incentive for the employees I think.

The managers and trainees at RetailCo identified a number of reciprocal promises. These promises were either explicitly stated, or they were implied in statements and derived by the researcher.

The company's promises to its trainees were identified by the managers as:

- Provide quality training
- Treat trainees fairly
- Provide opportunities for advancement
- Provide quality work experience
- Support and coach trainees
- Provide a safe workplace

The trainees identified the company's promises as:

- Provide job security
- Provide appropriate pay
- Reward commitment and good performance

The trainees' promises to the company were identified by the managers as:

- Commitment to training and completing traineeship
- Follow procedures and processes
- Commitment to remain with company
- Follow safety processes
- Be customer focused
- Be loyal to company
- Be reliable

The trainees identified their promises to the company as:

- Follow processes and procedures
- Manage store appropriately
- Apply learnt knowledge

Overall, there were some differences in the managers and trainees perceptions regarding the promises of the psychological contract. Managers seemed to focus more on relational, socio-emotional-type promises, such as loyalty and support. Trainees on the other hand, appeared to focus more on concrete, transactional-type promises, such as pay and following processes and procedures.

### *How is the psychological contract developed within the workplace for all parties?*

The reciprocal expectations between RetailCo and their trainees seemed explicit and had also developed over a period of time, prior to trainees undertaking a traineeship program. The learning and development manager explained.

Most of our trainees are not brand new ... we've had them in our employment for a while ... they've gone through our induction and basic training program, which lays out all our expectations from how they behave, how they dress, what they're allowed to do and what they're not allowed to do...when the state training authority contracts (are signed) ... we make it quite clear that (the traineeship) is voluntary and therefore we expect them to go in with the right attitude and to put effort into their learning. It's quite clear up front that there is off the job work and on the job work ... we explain to them what the expectations of the program are and (what) we expect (from) them.

Open, direct communication between all parties had helped to build good working relationships and to clarify what the reciprocal expectations were, as noted by the HR manager.

The relationship with the line manager ... the store manager ... (and) area manager (is important) ... they're charged with the responsibility ... of developing (our trainees) and getting some new managers for us ... the expectations are about us communicating what it is that we expect and what it is that we have to offer and them embracing that. We pretty much have an open offer out ... if you're interested in doing a traineeship we'll help you ... (we'll) facilitate that.

Store managers, in particular, played an important role in coaching trainees. Store managers also addressed issues in a timely manner to ensure that the same problems did not re-occur. As one store manager said.

The best way of making things clear is when they do things wrong ... we follow up a lot ... if you don't follow up then (the trainees) won't really understand if they're doing something right or wrong ... so follow up work is quite important.

For trainees, assistance from colleagues and verbal and written feedback from managers helped them to meet their reciprocal expectations to the company.

The expectations between RetailCo and their trainees seemed to develop and become clearer over time. The area manager commented.

They don't have much understanding at the beginning what the role is, so as they work through it they get a really clear picture ... the modules especially helps to get them to understand ... it's (also) a lot harder for them at the beginning to understand the policies and procedures and delegating, following up with other team members (and) planning. That's certainly a weakness at the beginning ... over time that sort of develops.

Some trainees also noted that as they began to perform at the expected level, company expectations of them also seemed to grow.

Sometimes the expectations between RetailCo and their trainees were implicit, gained through observation and/or understanding of the organisational culture. Most trainees commenced a traineeship because they were keen to become a store manager, however, these expectations were also an unwritten understanding that this would happen. For example, one trainee said.

They never really said that I would become a manager if I did (the traineeship). It was just an expectation (I had) of doing the course ... I (also) didn't feel obligated that I had to do a perfect job to get a store (managers role).

### *What impacts do RTOs, intermediary organisations and other stakeholders have on the construction of the psychological contract?*

The RTO appeared to be the most important stakeholder who influenced the psychological contract between RetailCo and their trainees. Over a ten year period, RetailCo and the RTO had worked together to design a relevant traineeship program. In addition, the managers believed that trainees

did not differentiate between trainers from the RTO and from the organisation, viewing them all as RetailCo employees. Both parties also seemed to mutually invest in and benefit from the relationship. For example, the HR manager noted.

If we're happy, we're going to continue to send people to them ... we were one of their earliest clients ... I would suggest that the senior management within (the RTO) would be promoting the relationship as well ... we have expectations that they represent our business and so if we are promoting our business as a good place to work, we expect them to (also) promote us a good place to work and that will be influenced by what they think of us.

The RTO had developed a good reputation as a training provider and regularly received positive feedback from RetailCo employees who had completed the traineeship program. The RTO training manager commented.

Our programs and how they're designed and developed provides (the trainees) with the ability to demonstrate to the organisation that they have the skills to progress up and that they have the ability to apply (their skills).

RetailCo was also invested and involved in the training programs and often ran some of the training workshops in conjunction with the RTO. A mutual understanding had developed between RetailCo and the RTO in providing feedback about trainees' progress and status reports were sent monthly to RetailCo by the RTO.

To a lesser extent, parents, other family members and schools were also thought to influence the psychological contract in various ways. Parents did this by influencing the work ethic of trainees, as noted by one manager.

If you were brought up (well) ... you're taught to do things right and work hard and ... you're going to go through life a little more easier ... parents who do have an input ... (and) show that they care ... those kids always ask a lot of questions ... they seem to be the ones that are doing well.

Some trainees knew what to expect from RetailCo and the traineeship program because they had family members who either worked for the company or worked in a retail environment. Schools, on the other hand, were thought to play a minor role in developing the psychological contract of school-based trainees.

### *What helps all parties fulfil their side of the psychological contract and what prevents it?*

Being astute and addressing or resolving issues as they arose helped RetailCo to fulfil their side of the psychological contract. The learning and development manager explained.

Sometimes we've signed people up on too low a level traineeship and we've picked that up ... changed it ... (and) upgraded them to a higher qualification ... because we've addressed it quickly ... it really hasn't had any long term impact ... it shows that we're at least listening to them and willing to say ... (we) made a mistake.

Regular discussions between trainees and store managers was another method of quickly resolving issues.

The provision of "exceptional" training also helped RetailCo to meet the expectations of trainees. In addition, trainees' expectations were sometimes exceeded when trainers went above and beyond in assisting trainees complete their tasks. As one trainee said.

If I had a Saturday off and I was sitting down doing the workbook and I needed to ask (the trainer) some questions ... I could feel free to call her ... and it did exceed my expectations that she took a personal responsibility to train me.

Recognising and rewarding trainees who demonstrated initiative and innovation was another method of fulfilling the psychological contract. The company benefitted from new ideas that could ultimately increase sales and trainees received personal recognition from senior managers that formed "a lasting impression" and led to trainees wanting to remain with RetailCo long term.

Knowing the benchmark criteria also helped trainees to meet the expectations of RetailCo. For example, one trainee said.

The weekly communication ... (from) our area manager ... lets us know how well the other stores are doing in sales ... he (doesn't) compare us, but gives us something to compare ourselves with.

The company had grown over the last few years, along with the reciprocal expectations between the parties, as noted by one trainee.

I feel like the company has grown from where they used to be ... sometimes you expect more ... (and) they might expect more from you.

If the psychological contract was prevented from being fulfilled, it was generally due to a lack of communication or a lack of drive on the part of the trainees. A lack of consistency in relation to training criteria also resulted in a breached psychological contract for one trainee.

Sometimes we had to do presentations ... it was meant to be ten minutes ... and very professional. Some people would come in with a piece of paper, talk for two minutes and it would be accepted ... those other people ... didn't fulfil the expectations of what the assignment asked for ... seeing other people stand there and talk for five minutes made me angry because they didn't do the criteria. If an assignment ... has stated goals, then you should attain those goals before you pass.

### *What is the impact of a breached versus a fulfilled psychological contract*

When the psychological contract was perceived to have been met or exceeded by either party it impacted positively on the individual. For example, good performance on the part of trainees often resulted in a good reputation and opportunity for advancement. Individual successes were also believed to positively impact on work colleagues and the work team. On the other hand, if the psychological contract was perceived to have been breached by either party it could result in a negative impact on the individual and the team and trainees were unlikely to want to remain with the company long term.

### *How can mutual expectations be made clearer?*

The managers at RetailCo generally felt that the reciprocal expectations between parties were clear and explicit, as noted by one manager.

I think we make it very clear ... I don't think there's any questions as to what everyone's roles and responsibilities are within the traineeship and what we expect each party to do.

The good working relationship between the managers, the RTO and the HR department also helped to clarify expectations. The managers believed in an open door policy and encouraged the trainees to ask questions and seek assistance where necessary. The trainees also acknowledged that expectations were clearly communicated by managers in RetailCo.

## Conclusion and key findings

Training was very important in this company and many years had been spent building a strong, long-term relationship with the RTO. This relationship was recognised and valued by all parties, including the trainees. RetailCo also had a well-developed traineeship program that had been fine tuned over the last ten years. Both the company and the RTO were involved in the delivery of the traineeship program and there was regular communication between RetailCo and the RTO regarding trainee progress. The traineeship program appeared to have good completion rates. This could be because most trainees had been employed by the company for a number of years, often commencing their employment whilst still at school. It seems that these trainees undertook a traineeship because they were keen to progress into a management role and intended to remain with RetailCo in the long-term. While the reciprocal expectations of the psychological contract appeared to be concrete and explicit, there were some differences in perceptions regarding the promises of the psychological contract. Managers seemed to focus more on relational, socio emotional-type promises, such as loyalty and support. Trainees on the other hand, appeared to focus more on concrete, transactional-type promises, such as pay and following processes and procedures.



## Case study - ManufacturingCo

### Description of the organisation and overview of apprenticeship program

This case study was conducted with a steel manufacturing company (ManufacturingCo) in Brisbane. ManufacturingCo was established just over 50 years ago and manufactured stainless steel commercial kitchens across three factory sites in Brisbane. The company also maintained sales offices in all the States in Australia. ManufacturingCo employed approximately 370 staff, of which 65 were apprentices ranging from school-based to fourth year apprentices. Ninety per cent of the apprentices employed by ManufacturingCo were sheet metal apprentices while the other ten percent consisted of boilermaker or electrical apprentices.

ManufacturingCo had a long history of employing apprentices but over the last two years the company's strategy for recruiting and employing apprentices had changed. Traditionally, approximately 20 full-time apprentices were recruited each year, once they had completed their schooling. However, ManufacturingCo found that after about six months, around one third of the apprentices would leave their apprenticeship, mainly because the work was not what they thought it was going to be. Over the last two years, ManufacturingCo had mainly recruited apprentices through school-based apprenticeships. Students were recruited in year 11 and simultaneously completed the first year of their apprenticeship in years 11 and 12. When their schooling was complete, the apprentices started working full-time in one of the three ManufacturingCo factories as second year apprentices. The company believed that the school-based apprenticeship program allowed the students the opportunity to get to know the organisation and the type of work that they will be involved in long-term. As a result, the school-based apprenticeship program had increased completion rates from 60% to around 90%.

ManufacturingCo had experienced some literacy and/or numeracy issues with its apprentices in the past. Their traditional recruitment and selection methods had not involved any pre-testing and so it was not until some apprentices attended their first study block at TAFE that any literacy and/or numeracy issues became evident. The organisation felt that with their new school-based approach, literacy and/or numeracy was no longer an issue and that if a problem was identified, it was subsequently dealt with by the school. The organisation was also currently participating in a national literacy and numeracy trial. Twelve apprentices had been randomly selected to participate in the 13-week trial. The literacy and numeracy skill level of the apprentices was tested each week over the trial period and appropriate interventions conducted if any issues were identified.

The ManufacturingCo apprenticeships were four-year programs. Following the first apprenticeship year, completed as a school-based program during years 11 and 12, second to fourth year apprentices are generally employed full-time at one of the three factory sites. Traditionally, the apprentices would undertake on-the-job experience under supervision and also complete blocks of study at TAFE. However, the organisation had become disillusioned with the training provided by TAFE. They felt that their apprentices were not achieving good results, and feedback from their apprentices suggested that the training provided by TAFE was inadequate and not relevant to the job they were doing. As a result, the organisation had recently decided to provide the training internally and had employed a training manager to do this. The training manager provided both one-on-one and group schooling to the apprentices on site. A couple of employees were also undertaking a Certificate IV in training and assessment to become internal apprentice assessors.

### Research method

The interviews took place over two days in late June 2010. All interviews were conducted at the main factory site in Brisbane. The interviews took between 25 and 45 minutes each, with the average time being 40 minutes. Table 8 provides a description of the interviewee characteristics.

**Table 8 Interviews: ManufacturingCo**

Interview Number	Job title	Organisation/Location	Gender	Age	Approx length of time with company
1	HR Manager	ManufacturingCo main factory	M		
2	Apprentice Coordinator	ManufacturingCo main factory	M		
3	Production Manager	ManufacturingCo main factory	M		
4	Apprentice 1	ManufacturingCo main factory	M	24.5	3.5 years
5	Apprentice 2	ManufacturingCo main factory	F	43	4 years
6	Apprentice 3	ManufacturingCo main factory	M	28	1.5 years
7	Training Manager	ManufacturingCo main factory	M		

Following interviewee consent, the interviews were taped, transcribed and then analysed to identify themes. Findings are reported according to the following six themes: The promises of the psychological contract; how the psychological contract is developed; the impact of stakeholders on the psychological contract; what helps and prohibits fulfilment of the psychological contract; the impact of a fulfilled versus breached psychological contract; and how mutual expectations can be made clearer.

## Findings

### *What are the promises of the psychological contract?*

At ManufacturingCo, the provision of appropriate training formed a large part of the psychological contract. The managers and the apprentices alike talked about the importance of training and being exposed to a broad range of on-the-job experiences to ensure the appropriate level of skill was obtained by the end of the apprenticeship. There was acknowledgement on the part of the company that in the past training had not been as good as it could be, but that this had improved with the introduction of on-site training.

Recognition that training obligations were not being met happened when, following a review, ManufacturingCo realised that only 30% of its qualified apprentices had the necessary skill level to be taken on as permanent employees. ManufacturingCo changed its approach and employed a training manager, which has had a positive impact. The HR manager explained.

(The training manager) got employed because apprentices were not getting the (required) training because their leading hands were too busy with work to provide that training. (The training manager) specifically looks after all the apprentices, so all the apprentices go through him. He does all the training. So it's like going to TAFE but staying at work. To me that's our main obligation to give them the ability to actually get those skills so they can become a tradesman ... It's made a big difference because even though we were still using TAFE at that stage, you can look back at the TAFE results and actually see that a lot of the kids that were failing TAFE and then having to redo re-sits, to what we have now, is very, very little.

For the apprentices, it was important to have a variety of learning opportunities in the work place so that they could increase their skill base and become appropriately qualified. For example, one apprentice said.

The apprentices that I've actually been through TAFE with, they (sometimes) come to the end of second year (and think) I need to go find somewhere else so I can get a bit more experience somewhere else as opposed to saying, yeah I've got plenty of differences at work; I do this one day and that another day, and actually get that variety. I reckon without the variety it's not really going to put decent tradesmen out in the workforce which would just be a waste of four years.

Apprentices at ManufacturingCo were paid about 20 percent above the award rate of pay. Despite the managers believing that their apprentices were well paid, they also acknowledged that apprentice wages were generally low and that this sometimes resulted in apprentices leaving the company.

Along with training obligations, the managers and apprentices at ManufacturingCo identified a number of reciprocal promises. These promises were either explicitly stated, or they were implied in statements and derived by the researcher.

The company's promises to their apprentices were identified by the managers as:

- Providing appropriate training; and

- Providing a safe working environment.
- The apprentices identified the company's promises as:
- Providing appropriate training and learning experiences;
- Providing a safe working environment;
- Being treated fairly; and
- Being paid appropriately.

The apprentices' promises to the company were identified by the managers as:

- Having a positive attitude;
- Commitment towards the trade
- Honouring the contract;
- Willingness to learn;
- Being punctual

The apprentices identified their promises to the company as:

- Having a positive attitude;
- Commitment towards the trade
- Willingness to learn;
- Being punctual; and
- Working hard.

Overall, both parties identified similar reciprocal employer and employee promises. On the employer side, similar promises related to providing appropriate training and a safe working environment. On the employee side, the similar promises identified by both parties related to positive attitudes, commitment, punctuality and a willingness to learn.

### *How is the psychological contract developed in the workplace for all parties?*

At ManufacturingCo, the managers believed that expectations were explicitly communicated through the mission statement and with the training and recruitment materials provided to potential apprentices. At the induction, the reciprocal expectations between ManufacturingCo and their apprentices were also explicitly communicated both verbally and in written form. The HR manager explained.

We've actually come up with a code of conduct for apprentices, which each apprentice gets when they start. It stipulates what their obligations are towards us in completing their apprenticeship. (It includes) expectations of when they're off-site and they're wearing a shirt that's got [ManufacturingCo] written on it ... (and) they're representing the company.

One apprentice confirmed that expectations were clarified up front as follows.

(ManufacturingCo) has got a book that you are given at induction, so they actually tell us what they expect of dress standard, helping out with overtime if required. All those things are listed. When an apprentice comes in they can see what is expected of them.

Other employees also played a role in helping the apprentices to form expectations, for example one apprentice said.

Once you start working (and) after getting to know everyone, you sort of get an expectation of what everyone else wants.

For another apprentice, life experience had influenced their present expectations at ManufacturingCo.

I think (my expectations formed) through life experience and experiencing work in different industries. I know how I have been treated in the past, and I know how I want to be treated.

Training obligations were also made explicit at ManufacturingCo. The internal trainers conducted regular performance reviews and apprentices were given feedback regarding their performance and perceived attitudes.

There were also implicit expectations at ManufacturingCo that were perceived to develop over time between the company and its apprentices. For example, one manager said.

The expectations are if you do the work, they will look after you in other senses basically. So the kids start to learn if I go well through my apprenticeship ... in times of need, if I do need to ask for a bit of time off for family reasons or anything like that, it will be there.

Reflective practices in assessing whether expectations had been met by both parties meant that the psychological contract was sometimes renegotiated or changed. The HR manager explained.

As the apprentices get more into their apprenticeship their expectations change. I suppose it depends on how we've been training them as to how they've changed. If we've been very good and they've been getting heaps of training, their expectations are probably going to be met and they're going to be fine. But if we haven't been meeting our obligations, their expectations are going to be low ... I think they change, but their change is based on what we are giving to them.

### *What impacts do RTOs, intermediary organisations and other stakeholders have on the construction of the psychological contract?*

Parents and the media were mentioned most often as other stakeholders who could influence the expectations between ManufacturingCo and their apprentices. The company was keen to involve parents in the apprenticeship, especially since many of their apprentices were still at school. Parents were also viewed as having a positive influence on apprentices. In addition, if there were issues to be addressed the company felt they could communicate directly with the parents.

There were also instances of the parents tackling the company if they felt that their child's expectations were not being met at ManufacturingCo, particularly in relation to training. For example, one manager said.

If we have any kids who have any issues about expectations it always comes from the mum or dad... we've had that where they've turned up here to say (my child) believes he hasn't been trained well enough in sheet metal. His expectations are different.

The media were perceived as playing a role in marketing the trades to young people, as well as State Government campaigns run on television and through expos. However, these campaigns and expos could also portray an unrealistic work environment to prospective apprentices as the HR manager explained.

When they walk in here they go hey, that's not what I saw at the expo. So the expectation that he saw there and sees on TV is totally different to what happens in reality ... the reality is that when you work in here it's dirty. You've got to pick up a grinder. It's noisy. You've got to get dirty. But when you go to the expo's ... and we're showing people these things we make ... we take all the things that are nice and shiny ... we also had polishing booths ... it was clean.

Other stakeholder mentioned by the parties included schools and friends. The training manager commented.

(Schools create) partnerships with businesses and organised agents and RTOs to get their students into the workplace for work experience ... giving them ... insight into what actually goes on within the various trades ... (some) had no idea of what the trade was all about. So negative about it until they actually came in a tried it. Now they're right into it.

Friends, on the other hand, could influence the apprentices in terms of the extent to which expectations were being met. For example, the HR manager said.

Apprentices come to me and say I've got a mate who's a sheet metal apprentice. He's the same year as me and he's doing this, this and this. I haven't even started that ... but if you're working in a workshop that's only got 12 people in it and two of them are apprentices, the progress would probably be faster ... here we've got 65 apprentices. It makes it a lot different.

### *What helps all parties to fulfil their side of the psychological contract and what prevents it?*

Reciprocation of expectations by both parties enabled the psychological contract to be fulfilled. One apprentice noted.

You can see the difference in apprentices, if they are really putting in a good effort (and) they get rewarded. They'll get a nice new project or a better project (to work on), or they'll get identified and given that support and encouragement, which is important to keep motivation.

Similarly, the apprentice coordinator said.

We've probably got two or three kids who will go forward and be great examples of, not just [ManufacturingCo], but of the trade and one particular girl, she will shine. It's her motivation that's doing this. We're helping her along the road, but it has always been her motivation that's driven us to catch up.

In some instances, apprentices were provided with financial support to further develop and/or extend their skills if the company believed that they were worth the investment. The apprentice coordinator provided the following example.

For three months before the World Skills competition in Calgary, (the apprentice) worked full time learning how to make the object they were going to be making in Calgary. He basically went off production and we funded him for three months to be the very, very best he could, because whilst he was there to market himself, he was also very much a [ManufacturingCo] apprentice. Our badge was on his name as well. We were counting on him to perform on our behalf as well.

Apprentices that demonstrated talent for the trade were recognised and rewarded by ManufacturingCo. The HR manager said.

We've given opportunities for apprentices to move forward in other directions while they're still apprentices if (they) show ... a sign (of having) a bit more skill ... a bit more savvy ... we'll actually give them an opportunity.

ManufacturingCo also provided other opportunities for apprentices, such as being able to undertake a degree course or being given the opportunity to move into a management position. Without expecting it, some apprentices were also nominated for awards, which often exceeded their expectations of the company, as noted by the HR manager.

Our school based girl ... we nominated her for a school based apprentice of the year for regionals, which she won two weeks ago. She wasn't expecting that (and said to us) I didn't know that I was going to get that type of stuff. We just found out yesterday that she's been nominated for the State school based apprentice. So her expectations ... have probably been (met) a lot higher than she thought.

Explicitness about expectations also helped both parties to fulfil the psychological contract, as noted by one apprentice.

I'm pretty vocal ... I've voiced (my) opinion ... If I want to learn something, I ask, then put it forward ... if you don't tell them what you want they don't know ... I've noticed quite a few of the apprentices aren't as verbal, they're ... more subdued ... I just say what's on my mind ... it makes it a lot easier for everyone to understand where I'm coming from.

The apprentices in general also acknowledged that ManufacturingCo was similarly explicit about what they expected from their apprentices, for example.

On the very, very first day that we came here and we did our sign up upstairs, (the owner) came in and spoke to us and told us about the company ... the production manager came up and introduced himself, introduced the factory ... how they run things and exactly what he expected of us, behaviour and everything ... it was very upfront ... it was made clear what the expectations were. I think we've got a book that thick of company policy and all that sort of stuff.

Apprentices appreciated the ability to openly communicate with managers, even if mistakes were made. These conversations provided an opportunity to clarify expectations and build trust and respect among the parties. This was evident in the recounting of the following workplace incident by one apprentice.

I knew what I was doing (but) got a little too confident with the machine and just did something totally wrong ... lucky that no one got hurt ... I actually put myself and the others in danger ... that was talked about, I felt like crap after doing it (but) it was just pretty much, well, this has happened, we'll leave it at that and it hasn't come up since.

If the psychological contract was prevented from being fulfilled it was most often due to a lack of support, a lack of communication or a change in attitudes. The apprentice coordinator acknowledged that there were times in the past where the company may not have provided the necessary pastoral care for their apprentices.

When you take on an apprentice now, you're not just taking on an apprentice, you're taking on his life as well. We get kids in here who have enormous life problems which up until recently, I think we really haven't listened to. We are listening now and we're trying to bridge that gap now.

Some managers felt that there were times when the company had not communicated as well as they could have, particularly around change issues. A change in attitude seemed the most common reason for ManufacturingCo believing that apprentices had not fulfilled their psychological contract. The HR manager recounted an instance where a particular apprentice had suddenly changed and there was a noticeable drop in work attitude.

Something's changed in the last 18 months ... I don't know what it is. I've spoken to him. We've sat him down. We've even had to give him final warnings, he got that bad. (We) saw him there as a shining light ... then it all just died away. It could have been outside influences (I) don't know.

### *What is the impact of a breached versus a fulfilled psychological contract?*

When the psychological contract was perceived to have been met or exceeded by both parties, it created “a positive work environment”. Satisfaction with the workplace was increased, especially if issues were raised and the company responded positively to these issues, as noted by one apprentice.

Most of the time here, if there’s something that you’re not happy with, they’ll fix it. They’ll improve on it ... it plays a big role in how satisfied the workers are ... (and) the apprentices as a whole.

For the apprentices, a fulfilled psychological contract also resulted in individual benefits, including recognition of achievements and increased opportunity. The HR manager recounted the impact of an award for one apprentice as follows.

We built him up because it was a good effort. He felt great about it. He moved up into an admin role, a better role (and) he saw that we helped him move up.

One of the female apprentices acknowledged that the organisation had potentially taken a risk by employing her. However, this investment on the side of the company had been reciprocated with commitment and motivation as this apprentice explained.

I think they are probably surprised at my stamina ... I think that they must have been happy that they made a good choice, that they took a risk and that (it paid off).

For ManufacturingCo, the reward and recognition of talent resulted in good publicity for the company and promoted their reputation as an apprentice employer of choice. For example, the HR manager said.

The word gets out around the industry. It makes us feel good. [ManufacturingCo] name gets raised left, right and centre, all over the place.

The reward and recognition of individuals also had a positive impact on work colleagues with the belief that everyone had the same opportunity to learn new skills. At the same time, ManufacturingCo acknowledged that too much individualised attention could lead to a “tall poppy syndrome”. As a result the company was keen to focus on benchmarks, rather than people. The apprentice coordinator explained.

I normally try to avoid ... comparing them to an apprentice. I tell them to look at the benchmark. Here’s the top benchmark. We’ve got several apprentices at that level. You are here ... if you want to get there, you need to look at what you can do to get there and how we as an employer can help you get to that level. So it’s about trying to coach them.

In addition talented apprentices had the ability to motivate and increase the performance of others. The apprentice coordinator made the following comment about one of the outstanding female apprentices.

She’s dragging other people up with her. She’s the motivator of a number of the apprentices who want to get on and do well ... (she) influences them.

A fulfilled psychological contract on the part of the company also raised the individual expectations and/or personal ambitions of some of the apprentices. The apprentice coordinator noted.

Most of them actually pick up and start to push harder ... she has stepped up. Every time we’ve stepped up to meet her, she’s stepped up and now she’s the one who’s pushing to go to a higher level of training.

One of the apprentices also said.

It’s pretty good to hear ... wow that’s really good work and (get) praise on something that you’ve done. You get a lot of self satisfaction from doing it. It makes you want to do better again. You always want to go the next step up sort of thing.

When either party breached the psychological contract there was the potential of poor publicity for the company. The HR manager recounted the following example of an apprentice who had not lived up to expectations of the company in terms of skill level and as a result had not been retained by ManufacturingCo.

He’s going out and he’s not giving us a good name ... he’s going to say that I did my apprenticeship at [ManufacturingCo] and ... it’s not a good thing for the company name.

### *How can mutual expectations be made clearer?*

Some of the managers at ManufacturingCo felt that to make expectations clearer, the company needed to be more explicit about the reciprocal expectations. They believed that open communication would also encourage apprentices to raise issues.

The HR manager felt that involving the parents would also help to clarify expectations about the apprenticeship. Involving the parents, especially with younger apprentices meant that if issues arose during the apprenticeship, the company could also contact the parents.

Others managers felt that through induction and training, expectations were already clear and the apprentices acknowledged that this was indeed the case. There was also the belief that school-based apprenticeships allowed an easier transition into the workplace because these apprentices “were already part of the team”.

## Conclusion and key findings

Reflective practices on the part of ManufacturingCo had led to changes in the company’s recruitment and training of apprentices. The recent move to school-based apprenticeships appeared to have increased retention in the apprenticeship program and also to clarify expectations between the parties. Commencing the apprenticeship while still at school allowed the apprentices the opportunity to get to know the organisation and the type of work that they would be involved in before taking up full time work. It also allowed the company to get to know the apprentices as prospective employees. The change from training in the TAFE system to providing internal training had increased the skill level of the apprentices and resulted in more apprentices being retained by the company following completion of the apprenticeship. Both parties had similar perceptions of what constituted the reciprocal expectations of the psychological contract and the well-defined induction process had helped to make these expectations explicit. Reward and recognition of hard work and talented apprentices on the part of the company was reciprocated with increased motivation and performance on the part of the apprentices.

## Case study - Hospitality and GamingCo

### Introduction and overview of apprentice/trainee program

This case study was carried out with a group of five licensed clubs in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). The pseudonym used in this case study is Hospitality and GamingCo. The clubs incorporated dining and entertainment, holiday accommodation, sporting facilities, a golf course, lawn bowls, fifty affiliated sporting and social clubs that represented thirty-three different sports and activities. One site was home to one of the key rugby union teams. This study focused on a wide selection of staff from across the group.

The clubs employed up to 300 staff across the five clubs in a diverse range of casual, part time and permanent positions. The organisation was seen as an employer of choice in the hospitality industry with in the ACT. It had an extensive training scheme in place that allowed employees to develop skills and advance in their careers. Apart from traditional roles of Bar and Gaming attendants, this group employed Club Supervisors, Green Keepers, Cellarman, as well as Marketing, Gaming, Accounting and HR professionals.

This group of clubs ran a two-year Group Cadetship program. It had deliberately chosen to label their programs as 'cadetships' to avoid any of the negative connotations associated with the term 'traineeship'. During the first year participants studied Certificates III and IV in Hospitality and in year two embarked on their Diploma in Hospitality. All qualifications were provided by a training partner and were nationally recognised. In addition to the Cadetship Program a small number of apprenticeships were provided in Horticulture and Electrical as well as Australian School Based Apprenticeships in business administration; where students from a nearby school undertook the hands on part of their course at the club. Table 9 demonstrates the courses that were available to staff.

**Table 9 Cadetship program at Hospitality and GamingCo**

Job description	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year
Cadetship	RSA & RCG Cert III Hospitality Operations	Cert IV Hospitality Operations	Diploma Business Management
Customer Service Attendants	RSA & RCG Cert III Hospitality Operations	Cert IV Hospitality Operations (optional)	
Trades	Electrical Apprenticeship	Electrical Apprenticeship (4 years)	
Green Keepers	Horticulture Apprenticeship	Horticulture Apprenticeship (4 years)	
Club Supervisors	Cert IV Frontline Management (First 6 Subjects)	Cert IV Frontline Management (Remaining 6 subjects)	
Club Managers	CMA & Gaming Management Development Course	Diploma or Degree level Study (User Choice)	
Administration Staff	Accredited job specific courses (User Choice)	Diploma or Degree level Study (User Choice)	

### Research method

Interviews took place in Canberra over two days at one of the clubs during July 2010. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes to just over the hour; with the majority lasting around 40 minutes. Contact was initially made with the HR manager who was informed as to the requirements for the research project via e-mail with information sheets attached containing an outline of the project. Once the HR Manager was aware of the needs of the project and availability of both parties, he kindly arranged for the participants to be available. A detailed interview protocol was utilised, in common with the other case studies. The interviews were taped, with permission, and transcribed, and then analysed to draw out themes. Table 2 demonstrates the breadth of interviews carried out.

**Table 11 Interviews: Hospital and gaming company**



Interview Number	Job title	Organisation/Location	Gender	Age	Approx length of time with company
1	Operations Manager		M	33	18 months
2	HR Manager		M	-	4 years
3	Horticulture apprentice (Green Keeper)		M	21	8 months
4	RTO Trainee Coordinator (TAFE)		F	-	3 years
5	Certificate IV Hospitality		F	19	6 months
6	Certificate IV Hospitality		F	-	7 months
7	Hospitality Trainee		F	22	5 months

The environment in which the interviews took place was very open, but noisy and sometimes distracting.

## Findings

### *What are the promises of the psychological contract?*

The trainees in this organisation understood their 'promises' to be the speedy completion of the assigned work, following OH&S regulations, punctuality, an attention to personal hygiene, and the exercise of commonsense. One trainee (Certificate 1V Hospitality) felt that these 'promises' were expected of every employee, not just the trainees.

Well they expect the same thing from us as they expect for anyone else. Just get the job done as quick and as easy as you can. With following the OH&S rules, and that's what they expect of everyone. That's what every supervisor should be expecting off everyone.

The trainees expected that their supervisors would live up to a number of 'standards'. These standards included a commitment to teaching them the correct procedures, enthusiasm for the work, honesty and approachability.

The trainees expected to be working long hours. 'Three thirty in the morning. Straight into the car, straight home, straight to bed. You get used to them really' (Trainee, Certificate IV). They also expected their employer to create opportunities for them to work and learn. They also expected that they would have someone to talk with if there were problems. "And I also expect fairness in the workplace, so no one gets picked on or anything like that" (Trainee, Certificate IV).

The RTO Trainee Coordinator felt that the 'promises' to the trainees were focused on the provision of job appropriate training. These promises involved: 'actually training. Its not just here's a book, go away. We discuss, we deliver something and we give them the skills or knowledge, and that they can then apply it' (RTO Trainee Coordinator). This training would also be customised to, and contextualised within, the work context, relevant and culturally appropriate. Beyond the provision of training the RTO promised to communicate effectively with the trainees, motivate them and encourage them. In reciprocal terms the RTO expected the trainees to communicate. The obligation to communicate was well motivated and couched in terms of the kinds of support and services that the RTO could provide to ensure trainee success. "We can make allowances, we can show understanding, we can do a lot. But if they just walk off into the sunset and don't call us or don't come in contact with us, we have to fail them if they haven't completed" (RTO Trainee Coordinator).

The Hospitality and GamingCo expected its trainees and apprentices to 'honour their agreement' to be punctual, to achieve to the best of their abilities, to put their best into their training and to "deliver a level for service that we require to our members and guests" (HR Manager).

The apprentice felt that his promises to the company were to demonstrate his ability to work hard, keep busy and enjoy his work. Reciprocally he thought that the company's promises to him as an apprentice "were to make sure everything's going right for me". He explained that this meant support with his TAFE study, listening to him and the provision of a workplace culture that encouraged his learning, tolerated his mistakes and provided him with friendship.

### *How is the psychological contract developed in the workplace for all parties?*

The terms of the psychological contract in the Hospitality and GamingCo altered and developed over time in the workplace. Management was committed to succession planning. "It's a high turnover industry and we've got to make sure that we've got the right people trained up to do the jobs as we go along" (Operations Manager). This commitment meant that they had put in place structures, processes and people to achieve this goal and fulfil their promises made explicit in the psychological contract. For instance they employed line managers and club managers who had 'good people skills' who could relate well to the trainees and the smaller number of apprentices. The Company had also developed particular strategies that involved providing the new trainees with an initial two-week orientation and induction. "So they come in and they do their Responsible Service of Alcohol, basic cash handling skills and all that. That's straight up. They also get through their Cert. III in hospitality in four weeks, which has worked really well for us. They do their theory straight up in a block and we can identify any issues that they have with the theory" (HR Manager). In this way any early problems could be identified and addressed.

The Hospitality and GamingCo had refined their recruitment and induction processes recently. The psychological contract began to be established at these stages. The Company made its expectations explicit during these sessions. The Company paid an adult wage to its trainees and it believed that this implied a level of work expectations that was appropriate. As the HR Manager said "We're not paying you an apprenticeship wage; we're paying you an adult wage and we need you to act like adults. So that provides a good recruitment tool". Another recruitment strategy that formed part of the psychological contract was the company's commitment to offering a career path to its trainees. "We want career minded people and we offer them a career. So we have to honour our obligations for the training and make sure it's accessible to them and understand their personal needs" (HR Manager).

The Hospitality and GamingCo had also recognised and accepted the volatility of young people's lives and employed a life coach to help the trainees adjust to work and their changing lives. This contributed to the fulfilment of the psychological contract. The life coach had a non-operational role and her job was to make explicit the terms of the psychological contract and address any issues with the trainees that could compromise this contract.

Twenty to 50 per cent of them will be with a boyfriend or girlfriend within the first three months. The next three months they'll be fighting; the next three months they'll be breaking up. So it's you know, they're living and breathing their first job and they're meeting all these new people and it's exciting, there's late nights. It's a fun industry so her role is to say look guys this will happen as a result of working late nights. This will happen as a result of working closely in a group like this. You need to be aware of the signals - any signs that might be a hint, and her job is then to talk to them about it, talk to them about any issues they might have with management, with the RTO or their course. She'll speak to me and she'll brief me on what they're like and how they're feeling and what the general mood of the group is. Then she'll get some input from me on what we're doing and she's got her way of being able to discover the underlying issue they might be having, she's done profiles on all of them for us so we know how to deal with them if there is an issue (HR Manager).

The life coach had an explicit and integral role in brokering the psychological contract between the various parties in the workplace. Hospitality and GamingCo felt that this investment was worthwhile and working in terms of retention of trainees. The Company also had a counselling service that was available to all employees.

The commitment to the development of the psychological contract extended to those young people who were not satisfied or comfortable with their work. The company undertook to spend time with these young people, to identify the problems and attempt to solve them. If the break down was irreparable then the company worked with the young people to find them alternative employment.

The expectations of the trainees changed and developed as they moved through their qualifications, as did the demands of the study. The RTO coordinator summarised this in the following way;

When they first start out they are very keen- and that's the best time to get them the most delivery, because they're motivated. I think as they go along they're expecting that it's going to stay at the same level, whereas the Cert III's operational. The Cert IV is supervisory, and then at diploma it's really management type subjects. I think sometimes they just expect it's going to be as straightforward or as manageable, in terms of homework or whatever, and then it does get harder. They're expectations are that it's going to stay consistent and it doesn't.

*What impacts do RTOs, intermediary organisations and other stakeholders have on the construction of the psychological contract?*

Parents and family could also provide the support and recognition of the young person's achievement. This contributed to the sense of resilience that the apprentice or trainee could call on in difficult or day-to-day circumstances.

Dad was telling all his mates down at work that his son has an apprenticeship in hospitality. He was mad proud of me. The proudest he's ever been. And I was like awesome. I know if it makes my dad proud then I'm going to try and stick it out for him. Like I'm not only doing this for me, I'm like doing it for my mum and dad and my sister.

(Trainee, Hospitality)

The trainees in the Hospitality and GamingCo regarded themselves as a group. This was reinforced through the provision of a range of social events. The RTO who provided the off the job training recognised the importance of the group interactions as facilitating the fulfilment of the psychological contract. "Like there's 16 of us and we keep close together. We enjoy our training days because we all meet up again. And the teacher will give us half an hour to catch up, like alright okay catch up guys" (Trainee, Hospitality).

The RTO that provided the training in hospitality and hotel management for the trainees coordinated their training. The training was delivered mainly on site with few visits to the RTO premises. As a consequence the RTO did not provide literacy and numeracy screening for these trainees. This was recognised as having a possible impact on the construction of the psychological contract and something that needed attention.

We have our regular face-to-face students who come into campus, and they're there constantly. We do an all day induction with them and that includes literacy and numeracy assessment. All of our students complete it in their orientation and it gets marked. We don't do that with our offsite trainees. It is an area we could improve.

(RTO Trainee Coordinator).

The RTO coordinator also recognised that the methods of delivery often meant that the Hospitality and GamingCo trainees were isolated from the campus based activities of the RTO and that this could have an impact on the construction of the psychological contract.

Just because they're in a different location doesn't mean they don't need a lot of the same knowledge that our new students do when they're visiting the campus. We give them a student handbook: all our students, even the trainees. But when they come into campus they actually meet someone from our student association and they meet someone from the counselling service. So they actually learn the broad range of services that they can tap into as a student. Even though they've got access to that and knowledge of it from a Handbook, it's not something that we emphasise to them the same way, because they're not coming into campus. (RTO Trainee Coordinator)

The RTO also acknowledged that the skill levels of the teachers were a possible blockage in the construction and fulfilment of the psychological contract. In particular the respective levels of technology skills and access to those technologies were sometimes mismatched and this led to problems.

I think we have some teachers who still aren't as up with technology as others. So you have some teachers who are like yes, it's fine to email me, and others who say no, I want you to phone. So there's an inconsistent message in terms of the method of it. The trainees like technology. They like having computers. They like having SMS. They like having all those things. So if a teacher doesn't use that approach it's easy for them (the trainees) to dismiss it and say oh, it's all too hard. (RTO Trainee Coordinator)

The number of teachers that any one trainee would be exposed to compounded the disparate take up of technology. "They get confused by the expectations and standards because they're dealing with more than one person" (RTO Trainee Coordinator).

The messages that the RTO was advocating were sometimes in conflict with the messages being put forward by the management. The RTO focused on providing opportunities for success in a supportive and encouraging learning environment. For obvious reasons the employer was more interested in getting 'value for money' from the trainees. The RTO coordinator commented on the conflicting and confusing messages that would therefore be given to the trainee.

I'm trying to get hold of Student X because they've fallen behind in their work. The employers feel that the trainee has done something wrong. We're not in a position to beat a stick, but employers are.

The consequent impacts on the psychological contract can be extremely negative. "I may as well give up now because I've fallen behind and my employer has the attitude that I'm not doing my work" (Trainee, Certificate IV).

Another stakeholder in the psychological contract was the Australian Apprenticeship Centre (AAC). The impacts of its operations were not always construed as being positive.

There's a lot of confusion around the sign up period in terms of what AAC is, what they do, understanding their role. They (the trainees) get a big wad of paper and it's like okay, I'll just take that home and put it in the corner to gather dust. I don't think they necessarily understand it.  
(HR Manager)

Parents were also stakeholders in the development and implementation of the psychological contract and had impacts that were either positive or negative. In a positive sense parents could be supportive, encouraging and motivating of the trainees and apprentices. On the negative side they could be overly interfering. This took the form of phone calls to the management complaining about shift times or ringing in sick on behalf of the trainee. The company's attitude was that; "We've employed little Johnny, so he needs to ring up. Its about educating Mum and Dad too. We say to the trainee if you've got something that you'd normally get your Mum or Dad to do with work, how about quickly have a chat to your mentor and see what advice they would give you" (HR Manager). The Company had moved to a mentoring program internal to the Clubs where managers and directors mentoring the trainees.

### *What helps all parties to fulfil their side of the psychological contract and what prevents it?*

The employment context was mentioned by all the participants as being a significant factor in the fulfilment or otherwise of the psychological contract. The Hospitality and GamingCo was located in a 'government town' and there was a great deal of competition for labour from the public service. This meant, as the RTO coordinator commented, that:

if people have either got a friend who's got a cushy admin type of job, and they're (trainees) working shift work and they think ooohh, that sounds more like me because I know I'll get my Saturday nights off or whatever. So particularly when they're young, we can lose them to a different employment options.

The trainee in hospitality who was completing her Certificate IV in Hospitality felt that the differences in attitudes, expectations and behaviours of her supervisors often confused her and she was unclear what was expected of her in her work. In many ways this interfered with her clear understanding of the terms of the psychological contract and her ability to fulfil these terms. "There's a big difference with the supervisors and this makes the workers confused. And some people get ticked off so they get angry and then the pent up anger can just lead to them leaving" (Trainee, Certificate IV).

Prior work experience for the trainees assisted them in being able to adjust to the terms of the psychological contract in their new work setting. A number of trainees had worked in retail and hospitality prior to coming to the Hospitality and GamingCo and they saw this as a kind of orientation to the world of work that assisted them. This understanding of work generally, and hospitality and gaming particularly, was considered to be a significant factor that allowed the parties to fulfil their sides of the psychological contract. The culture of the industry, the conditions and the hours of work meant that: it's not just a job, it's a lifestyle.

If the trainee had a clear career conception then it was likely that they would be better equipped to understand and comply with the terms of the psychological contract. The trainee completing her Certificate IV in Hospitality commented that "I want to manage the club and I want to go up the ranks of supervisor and I am going to finish my Diploma next". It was also the case that if the trainee had a clear goal and a sense of 'where you want to go' they were more likely to understand and abide by the promises of the psychological contract. "But if the people just did it for a job or just like to pass through something then just go on to another job" (Trainee, Certificate IV). This second trainee wanted to travel and saw the traineeship as the 'ticket to travel'. The ability to rotate through a variety of jobs assisted the trainees to learn the 'whole business' and they saw this as a real advantage.

The trainees mentioned the sense of being part of a greater whole as helping them to understand and respect the terms of the psychological contract. One trainee commented that "it's been all like a big family" (Trainee, Certificate IV). He went on to illustrate this with the following example: "My Nan passed away and I told my boss and he gave me time off. He knew exactly like you know, he knew my Dad and he had a family connection with us". Empathy and understanding from supervisors and managers clearly helped all parties to fulfil their promises in the psychological contract.

The Club had encouraged the development of social events. This had served to weld the trainees together with a sense of loyalty. "They invented the stuff so that staff would get along. It keeps you

all close together and all in touch with each other” (Trainee, Certificate 1V). However, this initiative had an unexpected consequence, in that it had created a situation where the group of trainees had been singled out for discrimination and compromised the terms of the psychological contract. As the RTO coordinator commented:

I know that also as much as I think it’s useful to team build them together as trainees, they also need to be team built with other staff. There’s that separation if you are a trainee, you’re different. I think it is culturally something that doesn’t always work. So within peers there is rivalry.

A good relationship between the management of the Hospitality and GamingCo and the RTO encouraged the fulfilment of the psychological contract. The relationship ensured that all parties knew and accepted their various responsibilities. This was particularly important for the trainees. They needed an RTO ‘go to’ person ‘and it’s something I set myself up to do. I am there on the first day and introduce myself as the coordinator as well as one of the teachers, I’ll always be there to tell them well, you need to speak to so and so, or this is their number’ (RTO coordinator).

### *What is the impact of a breached versus a fulfilled psychological contract?*

If the psychological contract was fulfilled then the impact for the trainee was very positive. One trainee commented that they felt that they had choice, mobility within the organisation and the opportunity to learn. All these factors contributed to his loyalty to both the club and his work mates.

If the psychological contract between the supervisor and the trainee was breached then the trainee goes back to the office ‘for a talking to’. Lateness for work in particular was a breach of the contract that had strong impacts on other trainees and was regarded seriously by the management. The consequences would be that “Like after a while they may get fired if they keep carrying that negative attitude and rocking up late” (Trainee, Certificate IV).

The trainees in the Hospitality and GamingCo were regularly dealing with money and this was a big issue for them. They needed to get their ‘tills’ correctly balanced and the potential for mistakes was high, particularly for the newer trainees. “Like if you mess up with the till, you sign a variance form. Like if its \$10 or more like down or up you’ve got say how it happened. You should have triple checked your account, like your money and all that. And you’ve got to sign a form” (Trainee, Certificate IV). The management regarded these as mistakes rather than breaches initially, and the supervisors helped the trainees to identify where the mistake had occurred. However one trainee described that if these mistakes were combined with ‘bad attitudes’ then the mistake escalated to the status of a breach and could result in possible dismissal. The responsibility for correcting the mistake or the breach lay with the trainee. “Well it’s really up to them if they want to stay or leave. Like after a while they may get fired if they keep carrying that negative attitude” (Trainee, Hospitality Certificate IV). The HR manager confirmed this impact and explained the mistakes in terms of laziness rather than lack of skill. “It’s not that they can’t do it, it’s just that they’re used to taking shortcuts. They’re doing that in their job, so we’re re educating them, getting them back to pretty basic stuff”.

In cases where a serious breach occurred, the impacts could be felt beyond the company itself. As the HR Manager said;

You’ve got a staff member that was on a path that’s gone off and you’ve got to try and bring them back and the people that they’ve told about it too. You know the bad press you get from it. And you have internal dissensions and you haven’t got a happy ship.

### *How can mutual expectations be made clearer?*

The mutual expectations could be made clearer by clarifying the roles of the various supervisors for the trainees. The role of the AAC could also be made clearer as this often lead to confusion and duplication.

From the perspective of the RTO the expectations about learning, the content to be delivered and the messages being given to the trainees could be more consistent both in terms of content and in terms of the pedagogies and technologies used.

The company and the RTO worked closely together on the delivery of the traineeships. However, it was felt that this could be even more effective if suitable resources could be provided by the RTO.

## Key Findings

This case study was carried out with a group of five licensed clubs in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). The Club had a large number of trainees and a small number of apprentices. The Hospitality and GamingCo had a strong commitment to ensuring that it had a continuous labour supply in a very competitive market. The company had promised to offer high quality training and had sophisticated recruitment, induction and mentoring systems in place to ensure that it fulfilled its promises under the terms of its psychological contract. The company engaged in strategic reflection and planning in relation to the retention of trainees to the end of their contract, and to retain the graduates in the company. There was a focus in the company on developing open communication, support structures and early intervention in problems that encouraged rather than discouraged young people. It had a sound retention rate in an industry that was characterised by high turnover of staff.