

The User Choice Program

Implications for school based apprentices and trainees (SATs) Information for employers

THE USER CHOICE 2010- 2015 PROGRAM

The User Choice Program provides public funding for the delivery of accredited, entry – level training to apprentices and trainees, **including school based apprentices and trainees.**

The Queensland User Choice Program enables apprentices, trainees and their employers to select a preferred Registered Training Organisation from a list of Pre-qualified Suppliers for the delivery of accredited training to meet their specific needs.

Pre-qualified Suppliers can claim payment from the Department of Education, Training and Employment for training delivered to eligible apprentices and trainees.

Under the User Choice 2010–2015 program, funding specifically targets the occupational outcomes of the apprenticeship or traineeship.

The funding priority of a qualification usually determines the level of public funds contributed to training regardless of whether the qualification is an apprenticeship or traineeship.

From 1 July 2013, the User Choice Policy was changed to remove the 100% Government contribution to SATs and align future funding to the priority level of the qualification.

- Priority One (100 percent subsidised) – lead to occupations deemed to be critical priorities in the Queensland.
- Priority Two (75 percent subsidised) – lead to occupations not deemed critical in Queensland but considered as high priorities.
- Priority Three (50 percent subsidised) – lead to occupations not deemed critical in Queensland but considered as medium priorities.

A link to the 2013-14 User Choice Price List which includes information on priority level, government contribution and pricing accorded to qualifications can be found at:

<http://training.qld.gov.au/training-organisations/user-choice/documents-2010-2015.html>

This change of funding will provide an opportunity for successful SATs to enter a training pathway that will provide greater opportunities for employment and sustainable job outcomes.

Existing students will not be disadvantaged and existing subsidy levels will be honoured.

SCHOOL- BASED APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS (SATS)

SATs are designed to support post school career goals by providing students with a clear pathway from school to employment after school.

School based apprentices and trainees undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship as part of their high school studies. A school based apprentice and trainees' employment and / or training arrangements must impact on their school timetable for the program to be considered 'school based'. Apprenticeships or traineeships which do not have an impact on the student's school timetable are not a SAT.

School based apprentices and trainees' are exempt from paying student fees under the User Choice program whilst they are at school. Once their training contract has been converted to full time or part time they are eligible to pay the student contribution fees and charges for the remainder of their qualification.

FUNDING

Apprentices and trainees can only receive one government contribution for a User Choice funded qualification at any single point in time i.e. a student is not funded to undertake two school based traineeships at the same time.

In addition, apprentices and trainees, including school based apprentices and trainees, can only receive a maximum of two government funding contributions under the current User Choice program.

Each qualification has a priority ranking. This priority ranking indicates whether the qualification produces skills which are in shortage across the state. A second qualification will only be funded if it has a higher priority ranking than the first qualification that has been completed.

Only training organisations that already hold Pre-qualified Supplier status with the Department of Education and Training for the specific qualification your apprentice is undertaking are eligible for funding. Australian Apprenticeship Centres (AACs) are able to provide further advice on other relevant funding rules which could apply to your organisation.

IMPLICATIONS

Students need to make informed decisions about what qualifications they want to complete since they will only be funded twice under the User Choice program.

Once they have accessed two funding contributions, no additional funding will be available through the current User Choice program. This may have an impact if a student decides to pursue a career path outside those occupations they have already undertaken.

CONTACTS

For more information, contact Apprenticeships Info by telephone on 1800 210 210 or visit <http://training.qld.gov.au/training-organisations/user-choice/index.html>