

# The User Choice Program

## Implications for school based apprentices and trainees (SATs) Information for Australian Apprenticeship Centres

### 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)

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.

SATs aim to provide students with a clear pathway from school, to employment after school. The objective of a SAT is to support the post-school career goals of a student. Different vocational education and training options are more suitable to serve other objectives.

## THE USER CHOICE 2010–2015 POLICY

Apprentices and trainees can only receive one government contribution for a User Choice funded qualification at any single point in time.

In addition, a maximum of two government contributions will be funded per participant under this program.

Qualifications which do not contribute to the maximum government contribution are:

- Qualifications funded outside the User Choice 2010–2015 program
- User choice funded qualifications which commenced, but were not completed

A second qualification is funded **only** if it is:

- A Priority One Qualification, or
- A higher priority than the first qualification

## IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL BASED APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS

SATs support student vocational learning and employment pathways. A key purpose is to provide a clear pathway from school to employment after school. However, some SATs, while providing valuable workplace exposure and the development of a student's vocational skills and knowledge, do not provide as a direct pathway into employment as others.

For example, many students who participate in some lower priority SATs such as retail, sport and recreation and business, do not transition directly into employment after school and often wish to access funding for a second apprenticeship or traineeship.

Under the User Choice arrangements, students, schools, parents and employers need to carefully consider any potential impacts a SAT may have on a student's future entitlement to another funded apprenticeship or traineeship.

As a maximum of two funding contributions will be provided by the Government, AACs must discuss the Multiple Government Contribution section of the User Choice Policy to assist students and their parents in making informed decisions.

Before accepting to be a student's Supervising Registered Training Organisation, training providers will need to know whether or not a student will be funded. AACs need to ensure that prior to signing up an apprentice or trainee they ascertain whether a student will be eligible for funding.

## **SCENARIOS HIGHLIGHTING HOW THE USER CHOICE 2010- 2015 PROGRAM OPERATES**

### **Scenario 1**

A student commences and completes a Certificate II in Hospitality (Priority Three qualification) as a school- based trainee.

The student leaves school and then decides to undertake a Certificate II in hairdressing (Priority Three qualification).

*Will the student be funded for their second qualification?*

No. The second qualification is not a higher priority. This student will be funded for a second qualification if they select a qualification that is either a Priority One or Priority Two qualification.

### **Scenario 2**

A student commences a school based traineeship, Certificate II in Sport and Recreation (Priority Three qualification), at the beginning of Year 11.

The student completes this traineeship and then decides to undertake a Certificate III in Community Services Work (Priority Two qualification) whilst in Year 12.

*Will the student be funded for their second qualification?*

Yes. The student will be funded for the second qualification as it is a higher priority than the first qualification. The student will not be eligible for any more funding under the User Choice program, so it is important that the second qualification provides a transition to the workforce after school.

## **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>.