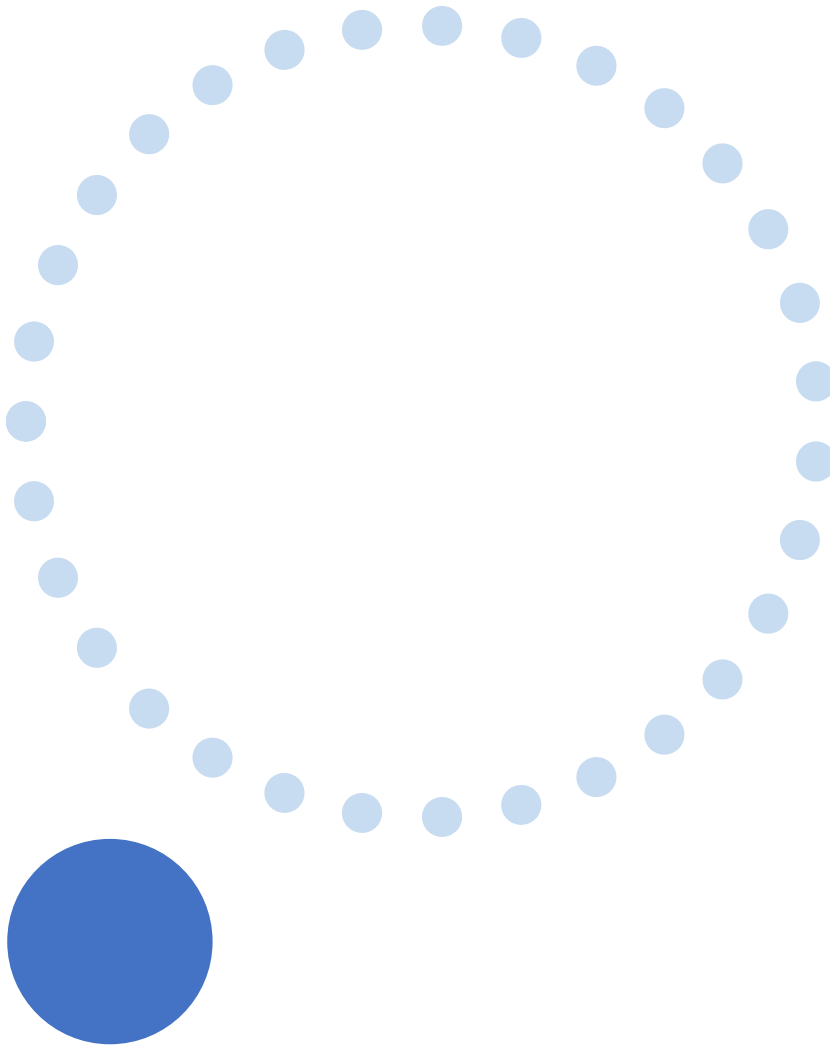
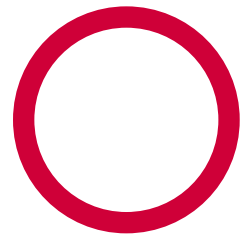


# NSW Group Training Organisations

## Registration Guide

May 2023



# Table of contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1	Application	3
2.2	Compliance Audit	4
2.3	Audit Outcomes	6
2.4	Customer Feedback	6
<b>3</b>	<b>REGISTRATION</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1	Auditor's recommendation	6
3.2	Commissioner's decision	7
3.3	Notification	7
3.4	Registration periods	7
<b>4</b>	<b>MONITORING</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>DE-REGISTRATION</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>RE-REGISTRATION</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>CODE OF PRACTICE</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>FORMS AND MATERIALS</b>	<b>10</b>

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Group training is an employment and training arrangement whereby an organisation employs apprentices and trainees under an Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract and places them with host employers. The group training organisation (GTO), as the employer, is responsible for the quality and continuity of the apprentices' and trainees' employment and training. It also manages the additional care and support necessary to achieve the successful completion of the Training Contract.

GTOs may be registered in NSW under the *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001* (the *Act*). Registration is contingent upon assessment and continued compliance with the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations (2017)*. While registration is not mandatory under the *Act*, it is a requirement for GTOs seeking access to government funding.

This guide has been prepared to assist organisations wishing to register as a GTO in NSW.

## 2 APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT

### 2.1 Application

#### 2.1.1 Conduct self- assessment

GTOs seeking registration in NSW must have a permanent physical presence in NSW. GTOs should undertake a self-assessment against the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations (2017)* in preparation for completing the Compliance Assessment Report and the compliance audit.

#### 2.1.2 Compliance Assessment Report

Once a GTO has completed the self-assessment, and taken any remedial action necessary to meet the National Standards, they should prepare a Compliance Assessment Report. The Compliance Assessment Report allows a GTO to identify and record evidence that demonstrates compliance against each of the *National Standards*. Supporting documents, including any employee, host, and/or apprentice/trainee handbooks, should be attached to the Compliance Assessment Report as supporting evidence.

## Useful Resource:

*Evidence Guide to support the National Standards for Group Training Organisations* – The Guide provides practical examples of evidence which GTOs might use to show compliance with the new Standards.

### 2.1.3 Lodge Application

Once a GTO has completed the Compliance Assessment Report, they should also complete a Group Training Organisation Registration in NSW – Application Form, and lodge both documents (and attachments) by email to: [group.training@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:group.training@det.nsw.edu.au).

## 2.2 Compliance Audit

### 2.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the compliance audit is to validate the GTO's claim that their operational systems and processes meet the *National Standards*. The GTO will be given reasonable opportunity to demonstrate compliance. There is no on-going registration fee, however the GTO is required to meet the cost of the compliance audit. The Department will also arrange for a Departmental Advisor to be appointed to participate in the process.

### 2.2.2 Auditor

Once the Department has received the Application Form, completed Compliance Assessment Report and any supporting documents, the Department will raise a tax invoice for \$1,500 (GST inclusive) as the initial payment for the compliance audit. The Department will also assign an external auditor to conduct the compliance audit. The external auditor is under contract to the Department for this purpose.

### 2.2.3 Observers

The Department reserves the right to have another staff member attend an audit as an observer, usually as part of training for staff.

The Department may ask the GTO for permission for a non-Departmental observer to attend a site audit. This may include a new auditor for training purposes, an industry observer or other interested party. The GTO may decline this request.

### 2.2.4 Other participants

An external person or organisation engaged by a GTO to help them with the GTO registration process may be available on-site to provide advice to the GTO during a site or

remote audit. However, they may not be present at any of the audit interviews or discussions between the audit team and the GTO's management or staff, and may not communicate directly on behalf of the GTO to the audit team or to the Department.

### **2.2.5 Desk audit**

In the first instance, the auditor will review the Application Form and accompanying materials and determine whether any additional materials are required before they start the audit process. Once all necessary materials are received, the auditor will conduct a desk audit, documenting evidence of compliance against each of the standards in the Compliance Assessment Report. The auditor may require/request further evidence after reviewing the report.

### **2.2.6 Interviews with trainees/apprentices and Host Employers**

Prior to the site or remote audit, audit team members may interview a sample of the GTO's trainees/apprentices and host employers. The GTO may be asked to assist with this process by providing up to date contact details.

### **2.2.7 Site or Remote audit**

Once the auditor is satisfied with the desk audit, a site audit will generally be conducted to validate the GTO's compliance. Where it is not possible to conduct site audit due to health, safety or operational reasons (eg. COVID 19), a remote audit may also be undertaken via video conferencing, web conferencing, etc.

The site/remote audit will either be conducted by the auditor on their own or by an audit team comprising the auditor and staff from the Department. The site audit will be conducted on the GTO's premises. The remote audit will be organised by the Department with links for the video conferencing. The date of the proposed site/remote audit will be negotiated with the GTO, and once agreed, will be confirmed in writing by the Department. The name of the auditor will also be confirmed at this time.

The site/remote audit will start with an entry meeting to discuss how the audit will be conducted. Audit team members and GTO representatives will sign an Audit Meeting Record to indicate their participation in the audit process. For site audit, the GTO is to arrange for an office or room for this meeting to take place.

Generally the auditor will ask to see evidence of the GTO's processes which meet the *National Standards*. The audit team may interview management and staff of the GTO, and inspect the premises. The length of the site audit will depend on the size of the GTO. It may take between half a day and two days. If the GTO has a multi-site operation, the auditor may choose to inspect a sample of sites.

The audit will end with an exit meeting to brief the GTO on the findings of the audit. All parties participated in the exit meeting need to sign the Audit Meeting Record. The GTO is to arrange for an office or room for this meeting if a site audit is conducted.

## 2.3 Audit Outcomes

The compliance audit may have one of the following outcomes:

- The GTO is **fully compliant**. The auditor makes a recommendation to the Department that the GTO be approved for registration.
- The GTO has identified **non compliances**. The auditor requests further evidence be provided in order for the GTO to comply fully with the National Standards. GTOs will be given up to **30 days** from issue of the audit report to address non compliances. A follow-up audit may be necessary.
- After reviewing any further evidence provided, the auditor may find one of the following outcomes:
  - The GTO is **now compliant** and recommends the GTO's registration.
  - The GTO is **not compliant** and does not recommend the GTO's registration.
  - The GTO is **not fully compliant** in some areas. However, the auditor recommends the GTO's registration with certain conditions. The Department may use its discretion to decide if an interim registration will be considered.

## 2.4 Customer Feedback

The Department may seek feedback on the compliance audit from the GTO via a customer feedback form. The GTO may receive this form at the end of the site audit. The GTO's feedback will be used to improve the audit process.

If the GTO wishes to make a complaint about any aspect of the registration process, they can submit a complaint to [group.training@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:group.training@det.nsw.edu.au) in writing to:

Manager  
Apprenticeships and Traineeships Unit  
Department of Education

# 3 REGISTRATION

## 3.1 Auditor's recommendation

Once the auditor is satisfied that the compliance audit is completed to the Department's requirements, they will provide the Department with a:

- completed Compliance Assessment Report
- signed Audit Meeting Record
- signed Audit Outcome Form with a registration recommendation
- invoice for the total cost of the compliance audit.

At this stage, the GTO will be invoiced for all outstanding compliance audit costs.

## 3.2 Commissioner's decision

Upon receipt of the auditor's recommendation AND payment from the GTO for the audit costs, a submission will be prepared for the Commissioner for Vocational Training. The Commissioner may approve or reject the recommendation for registration.

## 3.3 Notification

The Department will notify GTOs of the Commissioner's decision.

For GTOs that have had their registration approved, the Department will:

- issue a Certificate of Registration
- update the national database for GTOs
- update the Department's website entry for registered GTOs in NSW
- update details in the Department's Integrated Vocational Education and Training System (IVETS) database.
- provide the national logo for group training for use in marketing materials including advertising guidelines.

GTOs that have had their application for registration refused may seek a review of the Commissioner's decision under Section 54 of *the Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001*. Further information about the review process is available on:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/reviews-appeals>

Please forward the request for review to [group.training@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:group.training@det.nsw.edu.au) in writing to:

Manager  
Apprenticeship and Traineeship Unit  
Department of Education

## 3.4 Registration periods

Registration periods are at the discretion of the Commissioner. However, see following as a guide:

- Organisations not previously approved as a registered GTO in NSW – 1 year

- Registered GTOs seeking re-registration who have employed less than 10 apprentices and/or trainees in the last 12 months – 1 year to 3 years
- Registered GTOs seeking re-registration who have employed 10 or more apprentices and/or trainees in the last 12 months – 3 years.

## 4 MONITORING

Compliance monitoring will be carried out by way of monitoring visits or compliance audits.

Officers from Training Services NSW will be responsible for on-going monitoring to ensure that registered GTOs continue to comply with the *National Standards*. Staff trained in the requirements of the *National Standards* will report to the Department on any issues they note in their contacts with GTOs which may warrant further investigation.

The Department may initiate an audit at any time during a GTO's period of registration, either to monitor ongoing compliance with the *National Standards* or as a result of a complaint about the organisation. An auditor contracted to the Department will carry out any compliance audits. The cost of this compliance audit which may include the auditor's travel expenses will be met by the GTO.

## 5 DE-REGISTRATION

If, as a result of a compliance audit, a GTO cannot demonstrate that it fully complies with the *National Standards*, and it fails to demonstrate compliance required by the auditor within a given timeframe, the auditor may recommend that the GTO's registration be suspended or cancelled.

If a recommendation for de-registration is made, a GTO will be given 30 days from the date of the notice to make written representation to the Commissioner for Vocational Training. The GTO will be notified in writing of the Commissioner's decision once the decision is made.

The review provision outlined in 3.3 also applies to any decisions made by the Commissioner for Vocational Training to de-register a GTO.

## 6 RE-REGISTRATION

A registered GTO will receive a reminder from the Department prior to the expiry of their registration. The GTO will be required to submit an application for re-registration three months before their registration is due to expire so the Department can schedule a compliance audit. The GTO's registration will expire if an auditor's recommendation for re-registration is not received by the Department before the expiry date.

It is expected a registered GTO is employing apprentice/s and/or trainee/s at the time of applying for re-registration. It is at the discretion of the Commissioner to approve the re-registration of a GTO if they have no records of employing any apprentice or trainee during the registration period.



# 7 CODE OF PRACTICE

All personnel who conduct audits of GTOs for the NSW Department of Education, and any other personnel participating in or organising audits are duty bound to observe the GTR Code of Practice (the Code). They are also required to sign a declaration in regard to their interest and compliance with the Code.

## Professional conduct

Auditors/advisors must act in a professional and ethical manner, protecting the rights of the organisations they audit and meeting the needs of the Department. In doing so, auditors must be objective, independent, honest, constructive and diligent.

## Conflict of Interest

Auditors/advisors must disclose in advance any information that could limit their capacity to make unbiased audit judgements, and potential conflicts of interest must be managed. Potential conflict or competing interests that should be declared include past or present financial, professional or personal relationships with the auditee, its employees or competitors. Auditors should never accept gifts or benefits from auditees beyond modest hospitality.

## Confidentiality

Auditors/advisors must not discuss or disclose any information relating to an audit except where they are reporting to the Department or associated agencies on a 'need-to-know' basis, under applicable laws, or where authorised in writing by the auditee and the client. Information obtained during the compliance audit process, the outcomes of the audit and the report are treated confidentially by the Department and are not made available to other GTOs.

Relevant information from the audit may be made available on a 'need-to-know' basis to other sections within the Department, and to other relevant State, Territory and Commonwealth Departments as appropriate.

Private information including personal details is not routinely sought nor retained from a compliance audit. The GTO may distribute the audit report and make known the outcomes of the audit, at their discretion.

## Intellectual Property

Auditors/advisors must take all reasonable steps to protect ownership of intellectual property and any commercial-in-confidence material or information disclosed in the course of an audit.

## Responsibility to be informed

Auditors/advisors must be informed about, and be up-to-date with, the NSW GTR, including the National Standards and related procedures and practices.

## Client Focus

Auditors/advisors must ensure that the auditee clearly understands the audit process and their rights in that process. In observing a client focus, auditors/advisors will be polite, respectful, considerate and non-discriminatory in dealing with auditees.

## Accountability

Auditors/advisors must not act in any way that could prejudice the reputation of the Department or the audit process and must fully cooperate with any inquiry into any alleged breach of the Code.

# 8 FORMS AND MATERIALS

The following documents are essential to the GTO registration process:

- *National Standards for Group Training Organisations*
- *Evidence Guide to support the National Standards for Group Training Organisations*
- *Compliance Assessment Report and supporting documents*
- *Group Training Organisation Registration in NSW – Application Form*