

AIS

study
work
grow



**VOCATIONAL
PATHWAYS**
FOR ELITE
ATHLETES



VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS

For elite athletes

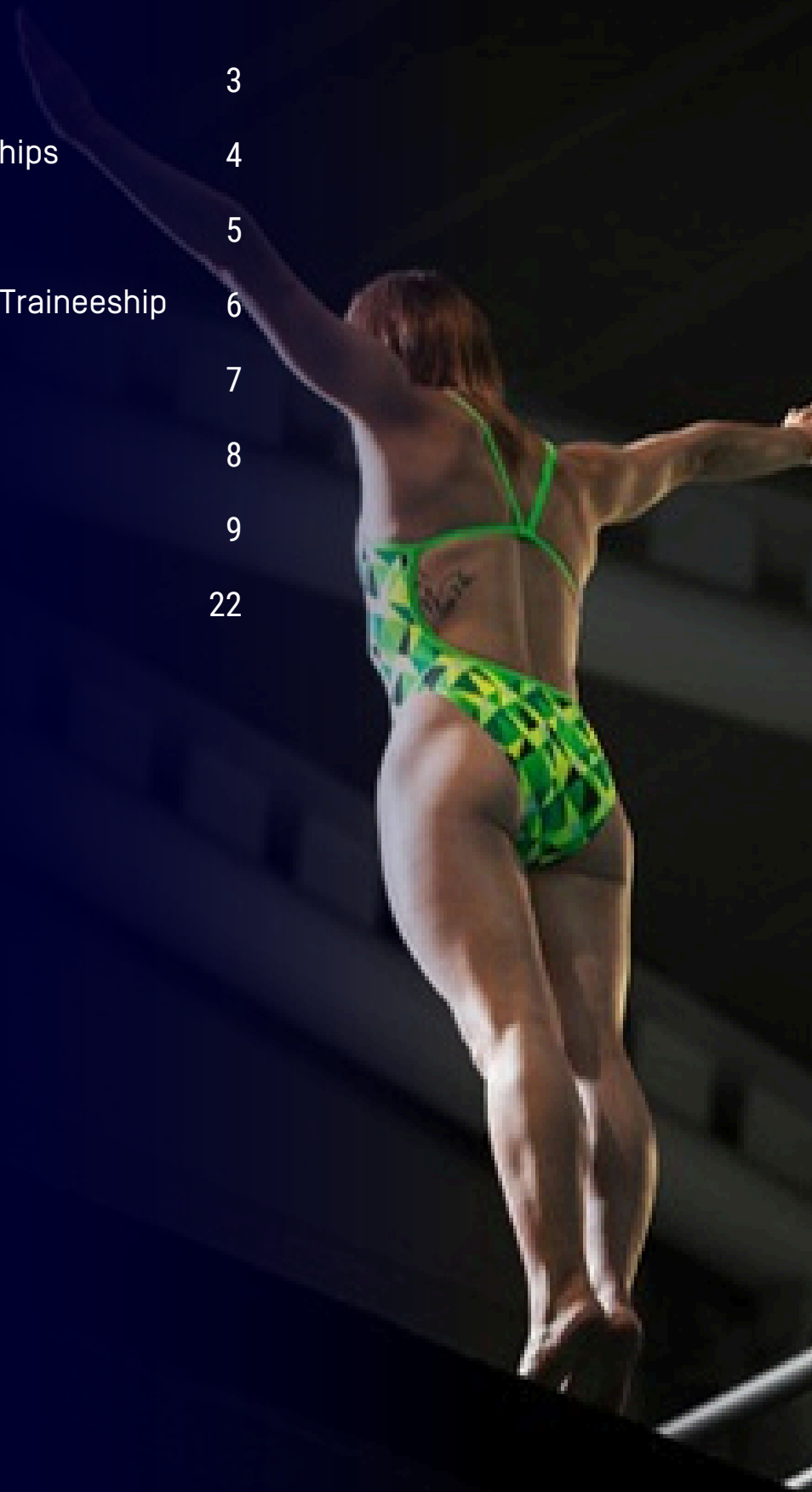
A guide to vocational pathways and programs for elite athletes in Australia. A collaboration between Study Work Grow Pty Ltd and the Australian Institute of Sport in 2025.

EDITION 2 | VERSION 1

The programs in this guide may be subject to change at any time. In our experience, programs may change at short notice, and you should always check directly with the provider before applying for any program. We have verified the information in this guide, but in some cases the information may differ from that provided on third party websites or printed material.

Contents

About Vocational Education	3
Apprenticeships and Traineeships	4
Flexible Arrangements	5
Starting an Apprenticeship or Traineeship	6
School-based Training	7
Fees and Funding	8
Pathways by Cluster	9
Further Reading	22



About Vocational Education

Your dedication to your sport doesn't mean you need to put off your career and education goals. If you'd like to learn and train (and even earn) all at the same time, then vocational education could be the best option for you.

Get a Head Start in Your Industry

Vocational education (or VET) focuses on teaching specific skills and knowledge required for a particular job or role.

Unlike university, much of the learning is hands-on and provides you with a direct route to a specific career or industry.

Vocational education isn't just for trades - there are courses available in nearly every industry, from health and technology to design, business, hospitality, and science.

You can also be paid while you learn by doing an apprenticeship or traineeship, which combines employment with your studies.

The Benefits

Vocational education is a great way to become skilled and ready for work, and is often faster than traditional university pathways.

VET qualifications are typically shorter than a full university degree, so they're easier to fit in around your other sporting commitments.

Plus, many vocational courses have no prerequisites for enrolment, meaning you can start no matter what your results are.

They can also be a great pathway to university if you want to upskill later on in your career.

AIS ENDORSED PROVIDERS

The [Elite Athlete TAFE Network](#) is made up of TAFE institutions across Australia that provide specialised support to elite athletes pursuing vocational pathways.

These institutions are aware of the needs of elite athletes and are ideal choices for those seeking vocational study.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Some of the most popular forms of vocational education are apprenticeships and traineeships. With support from your employer and a bit of hard work, you can gain skills, qualifications, and work experience without giving up your sporting commitments.

You'll be working for an employer who mentors you in all aspects of learning a trade. At the same time, you'll attend a government-approved Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to complete formal study. Upon successful completion, you'll receive a nationally recognised qualification, on-the-job work experience and income, as well as references and industry contacts.

Flexible Arrangements

You may be able to negotiate a part-time work and study schedule that gives you the flexibility to fit work and education around your training and competition commitments.

Programs such as the [Elite Athletes Apprenticeship and Traineeship \(EAAT\) Arrangements](#) in WA and [Elite Sportsperson Apprenticeships or Traineeships](#) in QLD can also help if you're an elite athlete wanting to pursue other training.

Read more about flexible arrangements on the next page of this guide.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS

Both apprenticeships and traineeships offer fantastic opportunities to learn on the job, but there are a few important differences between them.

The Duration

Apprenticeships generally take 3 to 4 years to complete, whereas traineeships are typically 1 to 2 years in length. Keep in mind this is only if you work and learn full-time.

The Industries

Apprenticeships are usually offered in skilled trade areas, such as construction, plumbing, or electrical. Traineeships, on the other hand, tend to be in non-trade careers.

The Funding

Apprenticeships tend to receive more government funding than traineeships, especially if the related career is an area where there is a current shortage of workers.

Flexible Arrangements

Just like other jobs, apprenticeships and traineeships can both be done part-time. And just like other study options, your training can be delivered in many different ways too. This can give you the extra time you need to commit to your sporting pursuits alongside your education.

Flexible Work

Before you approach an employer or Apprentice Connect Australia Provider (ACAP), you should have a good idea of the hours you will be available to work.

Part-time apprentices and trainees must usually work a minimum of 15 hours per week. You may be able to meet the minimum hours by averaging them out over 4 weeks (e.g. working 10 hours for 2 weeks and 20 for the other 2).

It's also important to let them know that your schedule might change as an elite athlete.

Making Your Training Work for You

The most important part of any arrangement is being upfront with your ACAP, employer, and RTO about your situation and needs as an elite athlete.

There are many employers and RTOs who are more than happy to offer flexible work and training, but you will need to be proactive and ensure you can be reliable and dedicated in return.

Flexible Education

The education part of your apprenticeship or traineeship doesn't always need to be done on campus or during normal hours.

Many RTOs offer a variety of ways to deliver their training, including:

- Sending a trainer out to your workplace to train and assess you on-site
- Block training, where your training is provided in a single 'block' of anywhere between 1 to 6 weeks
- Online learning, both self-directed and teacher-led

Starting an Apprenticeship or Traineeship

- 1 Research your options**

Read up on industries and careers and decide which might suit you. You should also research your **rights and responsibilities** as an apprentice or trainee.
- 2 Contact an Apprentice Connect Australia Provider**

You can't start an apprenticeship or traineeship without an **ACAP**. They will connect you with employers and RTOs, organise your training contract, and provide you with advice and support.
- 3 Find an employer**

Next you need to find an employer currently hiring in your chosen field. You can contact employers independently, or find one with the help of an ACAP or **Group Training Organisation (GTO)**.
- 4 Nominate a Registered Training Organisation**

You and your employer will need to choose a **Registered Training Organisation (RTO)** to deliver the training part of your apprenticeship or traineeship.
- 5 Discuss and sign a training contract**

The last step to securing an apprenticeship or traineeship is finalising the **training contract**. You'll go over the details with your ACAP and employer before signing.

Who Can Apply?

Anyone of working age can apply for an apprenticeship or traineeship - you don't necessarily need a high school certificate or other qualifications to start.

If you're under 18 you'll also need approval from your parent or legal guardian, even if you're not currently in school.

You must be an Australian citizen, permanent resident, or holder of a temporary working visa of sufficient duration to complete your apprenticeship or traineeship.

You also need to check with your coach, team, school to confirm how much time you have available and what support they can give you while you juggle your apprenticeship or traineeship with training and competing, as well as any other commitments.

School-Based Training

These days, many schools offer vocational subjects, apprenticeships, and traineeships. They're an excellent way to get a head start in your career while you're still at school.

School-based Vocational Education

Instead of waiting until you leave school, you might like to start vocational study before you graduate.

Many schools offer VET subjects to students in Years 10, 11, and 12. You can also choose to study a course through an external vocational course provider (such as a TAFE).

VET subjects can still contribute to your high school leaving certificate, and depending on how many units you complete, you may also be able to obtain a Certificate I, II, or III qualification.

Getting Started

Speak to your school's Careers Advisor, Pathways Officer, Vocational Education Coordinator, or Guidance Officer to see if your school offers vocational courses or SBATs. They will be able to show you what's on offer and provide information on how to enrol.

School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

You can usually start a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship (SBAT) in Year 10, 11, or 12. This involves a combination of classes at school, formal training with your RTO, and paid part-time work.

For example, each week you may spend 3 days at school taking normal classes, 1 day studying at your RTO, and 1 day at your job.

The training you do as part of your SBAT can also contribute to your high school leaving certificate.



Fees and Funding

For VET Students

Just like university degrees, VET qualifications typically have fees that you need to pay to your course provider. But there are options to ease the load.

If you're studying a Diploma-level or higher qualification, you may be eligible for a [VET Student Loan](#). The government pays for part or all of your fees while you study, and you automatically pay it back once your income is above the compulsory repayment threshold.

Each state and territory also offers a variety of [subsidies for VET students](#), which in some cases can make your training completely free.

We recommend speaking to your chosen training provider about what financial support is available before enrolling in a course.

For Apprentices and Trainees

Signing up for an apprenticeship or traineeship typically costs you nothing. Apprentice Connect Australia Providers are free to use, and they can help you claim any [financial support](#) that may be available.

Depending on the level of your qualification and employer, you may be required to pay a small part of your tuition fees to your training provider.

For SBATs, the government generally subsidises all the costs - however, it's still worth double checking with your ACAP or training provider first.

Your employer, school, or training provider may also cover these associated costs:

- Textbooks and equipment
- Tools and uniforms
- Travel costs to and from work and training

Each state and territory has different entitlements, so make sure you check before signing up or purchasing anything.

VET Pathways by Cluster

Innovators

Makers

Coordinators

Linkers

Guardians

Informers

If you need some inspiration to decide which future course or career you'd like, we have some suggestions to suit people in every Career Cluster.

The Cadi Career Clusters can help you identify your strengths, skills, and values so you can easily work out a pathway that's right for you.

Don't know your Cluster yet? Take the free online quiz at thecareerclusters.com and see where you fit.

Pathways for Innovators

Innovators come up with new ideas and ways of doing things. They design, engineer, and develop everything from the clothes we wear, to the food we eat, the homes we live in and the roads we drive on.

You might find that there are more traineeships on offer for Innovators, as many of the careers are non-trade based.

Innovators tend to be:

- Creative and forward-thinking
- Curious and innovative
- Great problem-solvers
- Continually seeking out new ideas, processes, and technologies
- Driven to see what's possible

SPORTSWEAR DESIGNER

Qualification: [Certificate III in Apparel, Fashion and Textiles](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Use your knowledge about what athletes need from their clothing to create new designs and fabrics that are sustainable, performance-enhancing, and comfortable. You may also do product testing and reviews. You'll need to be a great team-worker and problem-solver with a creative eye.

FLORIST

Qualification: [Certificate III in Floristry](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Create and sell floral arrangements that brighten up spaces. Learn about different blooms and foliage, perfect the art of floral design, identify seasonal trends, and master the ins and outs of flower care. You'll need a passion for nature and have excellent customer service skills.

Pathways for Innovators

ARTISAN BAKER

Qualification: [Certificate III in Baking](#)

Duration: 2-4 years

Apprenticeships available: Yes

Make handmade breads, pastries, and baked goods using high quality ingredients. You'll learn to follow and prepare recipes, come up with new creations, and work in customer service. You'll need to be a food lover who's great with time management and have good manual dexterity.

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Qualification: [Certificate IV in Design](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: No

Produce visual concepts that communicate ideas to inform and captivate audiences. You'll develop your knowledge of design principles, including layout design, branding, illustration, and typography. You'll need to think outside the box, take on feedback, and be a great team player.

CONTENT CREATOR

Qualification: [Certificate III in Screen and Media](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Create, review, and publish online content for organisations. You could be coming up with new posts, designing layouts, studying new trends, learning about algorithms, or preparing reports on campaign results. You'll need to be creative and have good technical skills.

Pathways for Makers

Makers keep everything working as it should. They operate machinery and vehicles, fix equipment and technology, construct software and buildings, and prepare food. Most Makers need a combination of both technical skills and specialised knowledge.

You might find more apprenticeships than traineeships for Makers due to the more practical or technical nature of certain jobs.

Makers are typically:

- Technically skilled
- Practical and hands-on
- Attentive to detail
- Excellent at following procedures
- Analytical problem solvers
- Strong critical thinkers

GROUNDSKEEPER

Qualification: [Certificate III in Sports Turf Management](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Apprenticeships available: No

Your knowledge of sporting venues and surfaces could translate well to a career in groundskeeping. You could be installing irrigation systems, marking pitches, and maintaining and operating all kinds of sporting and landscaping equipment. You'll need to be willing to work independently and to schedule.

SPORTS EQUIPMENT TECHNICIAN

Qualification: [Certificate III in Electrical Fitting](#)

Duration: 1-4 years

Apprenticeships available: Yes

Ensure that machinery and equipment used in gyms, simulators, training centres, or events are maintained and ready to use. You could be working as part of a sport team, in retail, or at a fitness centre. You'll need great attention to detail and ability to think on your feet, as well as being great with your hands.

Pathways for Makers

HORTICULTURALIST

Qualification: [Certificate III in Horticulture](#)

Duration: 1-4 years

Apprenticeships available: Yes

Identify, propagate, prune, and maintain plants and landscapes. You'll also be installing, operating, and troubleshooting horticultural machinery and equipment. You'll need to be able to communicate effectively, love being outdoors, and work well without supervision.

FURNITURE MAKER

Qualification: [Certificate III in Cabinet Making and Timber Technology](#)

Duration: 1-4 years

Apprenticeships available: Yes

Design, manufacture, and assemble furniture and cabinetry. You might be working with solid woods, panels, timber-based products, laminates, or other materials. You'll need to be creative and practical, good with mathematics, and have great problem-solving skills.

ELECTRICIAN

Qualification: [Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician](#)

Duration: 1-4 years

Apprenticeships available: Yes

Work with electrical systems and wiring in buildings, homes, or other structures. Install, repair, and maintain electrical equipment such as lighting fixtures, outlets, and circuit breakers. You'll need to have an analytical approach to problem-solving, good dexterity, and a mindset for safety and compliance.

Pathways for Coordinators

Coordinators organise, manage, and administer our events, systems, and economy. They play a vital role in making sure everything runs smoothly and goes to plan, and they work across all industries.

You're likely to find more traineeships than apprenticeships for Coordinators, as they are often more academic than hands-on.

Coordinators are usually:

- Organised and efficient
- Time management experts
- Strong communicators
- Excellent collaborators
- Decisive and quick-thinking
- Great at multitasking

SPORTS PROGRAM OFFICER

Qualification: [Certificate III in Sport, Aquatics and Recreation](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Develop and coordinate a wide range of recreational programs to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. You'll need to be organised and adaptable, as well as a great communicator and customer-focused. Excellent teamwork and administrative skills are key too.

COMPETITIONS MANAGER

Qualification: [Certificate III in Sport, Aquatics and Recreation](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Be part of a team that plans, organises, rosters, and delivers seasonal competitions and associated events in line with expected standards. You'll need excellent planning skills and the ability to effectively lead and manage others. Great attention to detail is also important.

Pathways for Coordinators

PAYROLL OFFICER

Qualification: [Certificate III in Accounts Administration](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Ensure employees are paid correctly and on time, keep accurate records of all hours worked and owing, and stay up to date with payroll legislation and organisational policies. You'll need strong maths abilities and be able to multitask and follow procedures.

EVENTS COORDINATOR

Qualification: [Certificate III in Events](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Plan, organise, and run of a variety of events, including functions, conferences, exhibitions, parties, meetings, and more. Great communication and networking skills are essential - you'll also need to be able to make decisions and solve problems under pressure.

LOGISTICS ASSISTANT

Qualification: [Certificate III in Supply Chain Operations](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: No

Working in domestic or international road, rail, sea, and air transportation, or in relevant support services like warehousing, storage, freight, and customs. You'll need to be a meticulous planner who can manage your time well, think quickly on your feet, and have great teamwork skills.

Pathways for Linkers

Linkers are people who help us find, choose, and use the services, support, and products we need. This includes people who help us plan our travel, find our relatives in the hospital, and connect us with support services.

You might find more traineeships than apprenticeships as a Linker, as you'll be building knowledge, networks, and services rather than physical goods.

Most Linkers are:

- Great at building relationships
- Active and attentive listeners
- Excellent problem-solvers
- Empathetic and patient
- Highly customer-focused
- Good verbal communicators

OUTDOOR RECREATION GUIDE

Qualification: [Certificate III in Outdoor Leadership](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Guide individuals or groups in outdoor pursuits and adventure activities, from orienteering, obstacle courses, and hiking, to bungee jumping, fishing, and whitewater rafting. You'll need to be energetic and a great people person in this role, with the skills to help people learn while enjoying outdoor pursuits.

RETAIL ASSISTANT

Qualification: [Certificate III in Retail](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Help customers find or choose what they need, carry out day-to-day routines, check on stock, and keep the shop looking clean and tidy. You'll also learn about new products and services and keep on top of brand knowledge. You'll need to provide exceptional customer service and be highly adaptable.

Pathways for Linkers

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER

Qualification: [Certificate III in Community Services](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Maintain good relationships and flow of information between organisations and community members. Provide updates, match individuals and groups with services and information they need, and help resolve conflicts. You'll need to be a first class communicator with great judgement, tolerance, and empathy.

ADVERTISING ASSISTANT

Qualification: [Certificate IV in Marketing and Communication](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Support senior team members with campaigns, including web and social media projects, by preparing design elements, reviewing layouts, contacting clients, and keeping records up to date. You'll need to be great at writing with an eye for design and have excellent interpersonal skills.

EMERGENCY SERVICES OPERATOR

Qualification: [Certificate III in Public Safety \(Emergency Communications Centre Operations\)](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Receive emergency and incident information, enter details into dispatch systems, alert appropriate response units, and provide relevant details to emergency workers. You'll need the ability to make decisions and remain calm under pressure, as well as great verbal communication skills.

Pathways for Guardians

Guardians are focused on health and wellbeing. They support others to be the best versions of themselves and help people feel safe, which means they can often be found working in healthcare, training, beauty, and security settings.

There is a large variety of roles available for Guardians - some are more office-based, while others are more hands-on.

Guardians are typically:

- Empathetic and caring
- Excellent communicators
- Good at thinking outside the box
- Resilient and adaptable
- Great at working in teams
- Dedicated and committed

LIFEGUARD

Qualification: [Certificate III in Sport, Aquatics and Recreation](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Supervise people at aquatic centres, beaches, or water parks, monitoring the area for safety issues, helping anyone in need, and providing first aid and care in emergencies. You'll need to be resilient, calm under pressure, and able to work as both part of a team and independently.

AGED CARE WORKER

Qualification: [Certificate IV in Ageing Support](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Provide the best care and support to elderly individuals in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, or in their own homes. You'll work with people from all walks of life and need to be friendly, empathetic, and respectful. High physical and emotional resilience is also essential.

Pathways for Guardians

FITNESS TRAINER

Qualification: [Certificate III in Fitness](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Plan and run both group and individual exercise and training sessions, provide personalised advice and support, and keep track of clients' progress and results. You'll need to be energetic, fit, and active, love helping people feel their best, and a creative problem-solver.

PHARMACY ASSISTANT

Qualification: [Certificate IV in Community Pharmacy](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Process prescriptions, manage inventory, maintain patient records, serve customers, and answer basic questions about medicines and health concerns. You'll need strong attention to detail, good organisational skills, and excellent communication abilities.

HAIRDRESSER

Qualification: [Certificate III in Hairdressing](#)

Duration: 2-4 years

Apprenticeships available: Yes

Consult with clients and provide a range of hairdressing services, including cutting, styling, washing, colouring, and chemical treatments. You'll need to be creative and dexterous, have great people skills and attention to detail, and commit to maintaining appropriate hygiene standards.

Pathways for Informers

Informers are people who use their knowledge and expertise to advise, teach, and guide others. They sometimes assist with tasks that people without their skills and knowledge couldn't complete by themselves.

Many Informers work in a professional capacity within business or government, but some also work as hands-on instructors or out in the field.

Most Informers are:

- Able to share thoughts and ideas well
- Committed to lifelong learning
- Curious and inquisitive
- Analytical and detail-oriented
- Strong collaborators
- Excellent communicators

OUTDOOR INSTRUCTOR

Qualification: [Certificate III in Outdoor Leadership](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Educate people of all ages and abilities to learn new skills and have fun in the outdoors, leading and supervising a variety of recreational activities. You need great collaboration and communication skills, passion to inspire others, and a strong awareness of safety.

PERSONAL TRAINER

Qualification: [Certificate IV in Fitness](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Support clients to achieve their health and fitness goals by designing personalised workout programs, tracking progress, and providing nutritional guidance. You'll need to be knowledgeable about exercise science with strong motivational skills and excellent communication abilities.

Pathways for Informers

LEGAL ASSISTANT

Qualification: [Certificate III in Legal Services](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Provide support to lawyers, paralegals, and other legal professionals by directing calls, assisting with research, drafting documents, managing schedules, lodging paperwork, or searching for information. You'll need to be organised, have great time management skills, and can work as part of a team.

LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Qualification: [Certificate III in Library and Information Services](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Provide basic information services to the public, catalogue new stock, create displays, manage or maintain library equipment, or complete and file paperwork. You'll need to be organised, flexible, committed to ongoing learning, and an excellent communicator.

LEARNING SUPPORT OFFICER

Qualification: [Certificate IV in School Based Education Support](#)

Duration: 1-2 years

Traineeships available: Yes

Support teachers by preparing learning materials, assisting with lesson delivery, monitoring student progress, and providing additional support to students with specific learning needs. You'll need strong analytical skills, the ability to work independently, and great interpersonal skills.

Further Reading

Before you enrol in a course, sign a contract, or start working, you should read up about your rights and responsibilities, as well as those of your training organisation and employer.

Here are some places you can find important information or continue your research:

[Australian Institute of Sport](#)

[Your Career](#)

[Fair Work Ombudsman](#)

[Australian Apprenticeships](#)

[Services Australia](#)

[Safe Work Australia](#)

[Sportspeople Job Board](#)

[Skills NSW](#)

[Victorian Skills Gateway](#)

[Queensland Skills Gateway](#)

[Skills ACT](#)

[Jobs and Skills WA](#)

[Skills SA](#)

[Skills Tasmania](#)

CONNECTING YOUNG PEOPLE
WITH FUTURES THEY LOVE



AIS

studyworkgrow

p. + 61 7 4039 3862

e. info@studyworkgrow.com

Study Work Grow has exercised its best efforts and judgement in compiling the information in this Guide, however you acknowledge that: 1) it is provided for information and general advisory purposes only and does not constitute professional, legal or career advice; 2) it should not be relied upon or regarded as a comprehensive assessment or evaluation or recommendation of your skills, competencies or personality or your prospects of success in a particular vocation, field or industry; 3) we recommend you contact the relevant educational institution or professional or trade organisation before making any decisions about a career or future plans; 4) to the extent permitted by law, we make no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied; 5) you release us from liability for any loss, damage or expense resulting or arising from your use of or reliance on this communication.

All rights are reserved.