

How To Build a Career in Hospitality – Complete Hospitality Training

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Details:

A hospitality career is built in a defined sequence: operational competence at Certificate III, supervision at Certificate IV, management at Diploma. Each step is a rung on the Australian Qualifications Framework, and each level says something specific about how much you are trusted to do without being told.

There is a second ladder running alongside that one, and almost nobody plans around it. It is the classification structure inside the industrial award, and it is the ladder that appears on the payslip. The two are connected by a single clause. Understanding that connection is the difference between collecting certificates and building a career.

Choose a direction before climbing the ladder

Our original career guide begins with your interests, not with a qualification code. Spend time in the kind of work that attracts you—service, coffee, bar operations, events, accommodation or management—and ask people doing those jobs what a normal shift involves. Learn from colleagues as well as formal training, and keep building communication, problem-solving and teamwork. If the specialty you first chose is not a fit, explore another part of hospitality rather than treating the first course as a permanent career decision.

That exploration makes the qualification and award ladders below more useful. Choose the next rung for the role and responsibilities you want, and use actual work examples when asking an employer about progression. Neither a course nor an award classification is a promise of promotion.

Ladder one: what each AQF level signals

The AQF is not a ranking of effort. It describes autonomy — how much judgement you exercise and how much responsibility you hold for other people.

Level	Qualification	What it signals
AQF 2	Certificate II, such as SIT20322 Hospitality or SIT20421 Cookery	Entry. Defined tasks under direction.
AQF 3	Certificate III, such as SIT30622 Hospitality (15 units) or SIT30821 Commercial Cookery (25 units)	Operational. You work with some autonomy inside established routines.
AQF 4	Certificate IV, such as SIT40422 Hospitality (21 units) or SIT40521 Kitchen Management (33 units)	Supervision. You direct others and are accountable for their output.
AQF 5	Diploma, such as SIT50422 Hospitality Management (28 units)	Management. Planning, cost control and responsibility for a function or venue.

SIT20322 and SIT20421 are two different qualifications, not two names for one — Certificate II in Hospitality and Certificate II in Cookery respectively. Both are current on scope.

Ladder two: your award classification, and which award you are even under

Your pay does not come from your job title. It comes from a classification inside a modern award, and the first question is which award.

The premises decides, not the job title. The same job — bar attendant, cook, food and beverage attendant — maps to a different award, a different classification structure and a different pay table depending on where the work happens. There are four destinations in and around hospitality, not two:

Premises	Award
Hotels, pubs, taverns, motels, resorts, casinos, caterers, accommodation, and function facilities attached to them	MA000009 Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2020
Not-for-profit registered clubs — RSL, bowls, golf, surf, sporting, community	MA000058 Registered and Licensed Clubs Award 2020
Standalone restaurants, cafes, night clubs , reception centres, roadhouses	MA000119 Restaurant Industry Award 2020
Takeaway, food courts, and food sold mainly to be eaten away from the counter	MA000003 Fast Food Industry Award 2010

Each covers its industry to the exclusion of any other modern award, so exactly one applies to a given employer.

Two traps are worth stating plainly, because both are commonly got wrong:

Clubs are not covered by MA000009. Clause 4.4(d)(i) expressly excludes "clubs registered or recognised under State or Territory legislation". They sit under MA000058 instead — but only where the club is both registered under a liquor, gaming, associations or corporations statute and established and operating not-for-profit for the benefit of members and the community (clause 4.3). A commercially owned venue with "club" in its name is not a club for award purposes.

Night clubs are not clubs. A night club is commercial, so it falls under MA000119 , alongside restaurants and cafes. This is the most counter-intuitive line in the set.

A few worked examples, since the boundary is what people get wrong:

Venue	Award
Pub or hotel bar	MA000009
Casino	MA000009
Restaurant inside a hotel	MA000009
Contract caterer	MA000009
RSL, bowls or golf club, not-for-profit and registered	MA000058
Standalone restaurant or cafe	MA000119
Night club	MA000119
Reception centre, roadhouse	MA000119

Food-court outlet or takeaway counter	MA000003
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The MA000009 structure, since that is the one this page details

Under MA000009 the classification structure is an Introductory level plus Levels 1 to 6 , organised across five streams: food and beverage, kitchen, guest services, clerical, and casino gaming (which has its own rate table). Clause 14 requires the employer to classify every employee in accordance with Schedule A. Classification is not a job title someone chooses for you informally; it is an obligation with a schedule attached.

Level 4 is the reference point for the whole of MA000009. The Cook (tradesperson) grade 3 rate at Level 4 is the award's standard weekly rate and standard hourly rate, and it is what apprentice percentages are calculated from.

The other three awards each have their own Schedule A , with their own classification names and numbering, so the level numbers do not map across one for one.

This page deliberately prints no dollar figures, because a wage rate published on a web page ages faster than the page does — award rates re-set every 1 July. Confirm current rates against the Fair Work Ombudsman's Pay and Conditions Tool, for the award code that covers your venue.

The clause that links the two ladders

Clause 2 of MA000009 defines when an employee has the appropriate level of training . An employee has it if they have:

completed an appropriate training program that meets the training and assessment requirements of a qualification or one or more appropriate units of competency forming part of a training package ; or
been assessed by a qualified skills assessor as having skills at least equivalent to that training; or
as at 30 June 2010, had been doing the work of that classification for at least three months.

Limb 1 is worth reading twice. It is satisfied by units of competency , not only by a whole qualification. A Statement of Attainment for the right units can carry weight here. Limb 3 is a closed transitional provision fixed to that date rather than a rolling three-month test, so it is of no practical use to anyone starting now.

The Level 4 floor — and it is in three of the four awards

This is the most concrete thing a qualification does for a hospitality career, and it is not confined to one award. A relevant AQF Certificate III or higher, used at work , sets a minimum classification of Level 4 under:

Award	Floor	Rate clause
MA000009 Hospitality Industry (General)	Level 4	clause 18.1, adult rates
MA000119 Restaurant Industry	Level 4	clause 18.1, adult rates
MA000058 Registered and Licensed Clubs	Level 4	clause 18.3
MA000003 Fast Food	no equivalent provision	—

So in three of the four places a hospitality job can sit, finishing a relevant Certificate III has a defined effect on the floor of your pay. Only the fast food award carries no such note.

Three differences worth respecting, because this is a pay entitlement rather than a courtesy:

MA000009 and MA000119 both require that you make use of the skills and knowledge derived from the Certificate III competencies, relevant to the work undertaken. It is not automatic on completion, and holding a certificate in a drawer while working in an unrelated role does not meet the test.

MA000058 states the floor for "AQF Certificate III qualifications relevant to the classification in which they are employed" — without the words "or higher" — and adds that the Fair Work Commission may require the employee to demonstrate that they utilise the relevant skills.

Dispute routes differ. A Level 4 classification dispute goes to the clause 40 dispute resolution procedure under MA000009, clause 34 under MA000119, and by referral to the Fair Work Commission under MA000058.

This is the thing to raise at the offer stage rather than discover eighteen months later.

Where the Introductory level fits, and when it must end

Under MA000009, Introductory level is for someone entering the industry who does not yet demonstrate the competency requirements of Level 1. It has a clock on it:

The employee remains at Introductory level for up to three months while undertaking appropriate training and being assessed for competency to move to Level 1.

At the end of that period the employee moves to Level 1, unless the employee and employer mutually agree that further training of up to three months is required.

The maximum is therefore six months.

It is not an indefinite holding classification, and it is not the trainee arrangement. A trainee under a registered training contract is paid under the National Training Wage, not at Introductory level. If you have been sitting at Introductory level for a year, something has gone wrong.

Higher duties, which is how progression usually starts in practice

Most people step up before they are promoted. Clause 22 of MA000009 addresses that. Where an employee performs two or more hours in a day at a higher classification, they attract the higher rate for the whole day. Where it is less than two hours, they attract the higher rate for the time worked only. Food and beverage attendants grades 2 and 3 are excluded from that provision.

So the shift you cover for an absent supervisor is not a favour with no mechanism behind it. Keeping a dated record of those shifts does two jobs at once: it supports the higher duties position, and it becomes the workplace evidence that recognition of prior learning is assessed against later.

And under clause 3.3 your employer must make the award and the National Employment Standards available to all employees, either on a noticeboard or by accessible electronic means. You are entitled to read the document that classifies you.

What is legally gated, stage by stage

Qualifications open doors. A small number of credentials are the door.

Credential	When it is required	The catch
RSA — the unit is SITHFAB021	Check the applicable timing before serving alcohol	National RSA training is subject to each jurisdiction's recognition, certificate and refresher rules. NSW has temporary-interstate

		and bridging pathways; Victoria offers bridging for eligible holders; SA applies provider and training-date rules. See RSA recognition by jurisdiction .
Food handler training	Before you engage in a prescribed activity	Under Standard 3.2.2A it does not have to be accredited, has no mandated refresher period, and the business is not required to keep records of it. A free non-accredited course covering safe food handling, food contamination, cleaning and sanitising, and personal hygiene satisfies the law. The accredited unit SITXFSA005 buys portability and proof, not permission.
Food Safety Supervisor	The business must appoint one before a prescribed activity, for category one and category two businesses	The certificate must have been issued within the immediately preceding five years, and the FSS must remain reasonably available. We are not on the NSW Food Authority's approved provider list , so we cannot issue the NSW Food Safety Supervisor certificate.
Responsible Service of Gambling, Victoria	Module 1 within one month and Module 2 within six months for new staff; separate refresher deadlines apply	Victorian RSG is free approved training: online modules through RSG Online and venue-arranged sessions with venue support workers. National SITHGAM training does not replace it.

See RSA , how long does an RSA last and understanding Standard 3.2.2A for the detail on each.

The sequence in practice

Certificate III is where the technical base is set — service, food safety, the routines that make a shift repeatable. It is a real qualification rather than a stepping stone, and plenty of careers stay here productively. SIT30622 is 15 units (6 core, 9 elective); SIT30722 Certificate III in Hospitality (Restaurant Front of House) is 20 units and makes RSA and cash handling core rather than elective.

The Certificate IV in Hospitality is the honest hinge point. Supervision is a different job from service, not a bigger version of it. Three of the nine core units in SIT40422 are human resources units — coaching others in job skills, rostering staff, and leading and managing people. That is the qualification telling you what the job actually is. People who skip this step and land in a supervisory role without it usually learn it the expensive way.

The one unit that starts earlier than people expect

SITXHRM007 Coach others in job skills is not a Certificate IV unit. It is core in SIT30622 , SIT30722 , SIT30821 and SIT40422 — that is, in three Certificate IIIs as well as the Certificate IV. Training a colleague is treated by the training package as an operational skill, not a supervisory one, which is why almost anyone who finishes a Certificate III with us has already been assessed on it.

It is worth knowing what that assessment actually involves, because it is the earliest point in the sequence where you are judged on someone else's learning rather than your own output. The unit has three elements: prepare for on-the-job coaching, by identifying coaching needs through discussion; coach colleagues on the job, by explaining the purpose, demonstrating the skill, communicating the knowledge, providing opportunities to practise and delivering feedback; and follow up coaching, by monitoring progress, reporting outcomes and identifying performance problems.

The counted requirement is the part to plan for. You must provide on-the-job coaching to two different colleagues , and in each session you must address identified performance problems or difficulties and rectify or refer them as appropriate, then evaluate the colleague's performance and give constructive feedback . Doing so, you apply clear communication and demonstration of the organisational tasks required, complete the training within commercial time constraints — in other words during real service, not in a quiet classroom — and work through the six key principles of training : explanation, demonstration, review, listening to the trainee's explanation, observing and evaluating the trainee's demonstration, and providing feedback.

The unit also names the performance problems it expects you to handle rather than leaving them vague: a breakdown in communication ; inappropriate circumstances for coaching ; insufficient opportunity to practise ; language or cultural barriers ; and shyness or lack of confidence . Those five are the realistic obstacles on a busy floor, and being able to describe how you dealt with one of them is the difference between a competent claim and a plausible one. See the benefits of cross-training .

Diploma is where planning and financial responsibility enter. SIT50422 is 28 units with only 11 core, so the elective choice genuinely shapes the outcome. Its core includes SITXGLC002 Identify and manage legal risks and comply with law, and SITXWHS007 Implement and monitor work health and safety practices — the compliance load that comes with running a venue rather than a section.

Recognition of prior learning and credit transfer are different doors

People use the terms interchangeably. The Standards do not.

	Recognition of prior learning	Credit transfer
Standard	1.6	1.7
What is assessed	Evidence of prior skills, learning and experience, against the unit requirements, through the RTO's assessment system	Prior completion of an equivalent training product
Evidence you bring	Payslips, position descriptions, references, a supervisor prepared to verify what you did	AQF certification documentation or an authenticated VET transcript
Realistic outcome	Some units signed off, some still to study	The unit is credited, subject to any licensing or regulatory restriction

Both Standards require the RTO to offer the opportunity, make its policy known, document the decision, and decide in a way that is fair, transparent, consistent among students, and preserves the integrity of the training product. RPL is a genuine assessment against the same evidence requirements, not a waiver.

The pre-training review, and the Standard that requires it

The moment to raise both is the pre-training review CHT completes as part of application and enrolment. That review is not a courtesy or a sales conversation. It is required by Standard 2.2 of the Outcome Standards for RTOs, which reads: "VET students are advised, prior to enrolment, about the suitability of the training product for them, taking into account the student's skills and competencies."

The performance indicators under that Standard require the RTO to have procedures to review, prior to enrolment, the skills and competencies of prospective students — including their language, literacy and numeracy proficiency and their digital literacy — and to advise each prospective student whether the training product suits them. The review must also consider individual requirements including physical skills, prior experience, prerequisites and entry requirements.

So the review exists to check you are enrolling in the right qualification, understand your current competencies, identify RPL and credit transfer opportunities, shape the learning and assessment strategy, and work out what support you need. It is also where any licensing or occupational licence requirement attaching to your intended role has to be disclosed to you.

Name the instrument when you go looking for this. The National Code 2018 also has a Standard 2.2, and it is a different provision for a different group: it concerns assessing an overseas student's English, qualifications or work experience for course entry. If you are a domestic student, the Outcome Standards provision is the one that applies to you.

Two things to know before you plan around a specific code

First, delivery is not uniform across the country. Both Diplomas — SIT50422 Hospitality Management and SIT50322 Event Management — are Victoria only. Commercial cookery is limited to South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia, and kitchen management to Victoria and Western Australia.

One caution about where that information comes from, because it matters if you are checking it yourself. The training.gov.au scope data for RTO 3722 records every component at extent "Deliver and assess" with no jurisdiction field at all, so the state limits are not verifiable from the scope register. Treat them as our own delivery information and confirm delivery for your state before you build a plan around a specific code.

For the record, that registered scope currently carries 17 qualifications, 81 skill sets and 579 units. One of the 17, SIR30216 Certificate III in Retail, carries an end date of 28 June 2024 and is not available.

Second, CHT stops at AQF 5. There is no Advanced Diploma on scope. A Diploma is a common basis for credit into a university degree, but how much advanced standing you receive is the university's decision, not the RTO's. Ask them before you enrol anywhere.

The sideways rung

Not every step is upward within hospitality. BSB40520 Certificate IV in Leadership and Management is twelve units — five core, seven elective — delivered nationally, and is a general management credential rather than a hospitality-specific one. It suits someone whose next role is about leading people rather than running service, and it travels into other industries. It is also equivalent to the superseded BSB42015, so an older qualification in that line is not devalued.

The full range, including qualifications in community services that are on scope but not heavily advertised, is on the course list. For a broader view of destinations, see what career paths a hospitality qualification can open up.

If migration is part of the plan, the occupation matters more than the course

Skilled migration runs on ANZSCO occupation codes. Note that the Australian Bureau of Statistics superseded ANZSCO with OSCA in 2024, but migration programs still operate on ANZSCO codes — do not substitute OSCA codes into migration paperwork.

In this field, through Trades Recognition Australia, only Chef (351311) and Cook (351411) are assessable. Chef sits at ANZSCO skill level 2 with an indicative Diploma or above; Cook sits at skill level 3 with an indicative Certificate III plus two years of on-the-job training, or a Certificate IV. Cafe or Restaurant Manager (141111) is not on the Core Skills Occupation List, while Hotel or Motel Manager (141311) and Licensed Club Manager (141411) are. The pathway is not closed, but it turns on which occupation the nomination is made in.

One limitation to carry with that: Home Affairs applies caveats to Chef and Cook in certain circumstances — fast food outlets, limited-service restaurants and business size are the named examples — and those caveats were not retrieved for this page and could materially narrow the practical pathway. List status is not the same as a clear pathway. Verify the current caveats with the Department of Home Affairs, and take advice from a registered migration agent rather than a training provider. See skills assessment.

About us

We are Complete Hospitality Training — legal name Complete Hospitality Training (Vic) Pty Ltd, RTO 3722, CRICOS 04242E, ABN 27 006 947 262, ACN 006 947 262. Registered as RTO 3722 since 1 June 1994. Regulated nationally by ASQA since 8 September 2017, when registration transferred from the Victorian regulator (VRQA). The current registration period runs 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2032, exercised by ASQA under the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011.

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Trading names on the RTO 3722 record. Five are current — Victorian Bar School (from 1 June 1994, the original), Complete Hospitality Training (2011), Ready Serve Achieve Melbourne (2018), Coffee School by CHT (2021) and Alchemy Institute of Australia (2024). A sixth, Complete Healthcare Training, ran from 24 October 2023 to 19 April 2025 and has ended. A certificate issued under any of those names is an RTO 3722 credential.

We link to the relevant course and regulatory sources in this guide. Check those sources for current requirements, and confirm course availability, delivery, fees and entry requirements with us before enrolling.

Source records and further guidance

We link the unit records and regulator guidance relevant to this page below. Check the current source before making an enrolment, licensing or employment decision.

SIT30622 Certificate III in Hospitality

SIT40422 Certificate IV in Hospitality

SIT30722 Certificate III in Hospitality (Restaurant Front of House)

SIT30821 Certificate III in Commercial Cookery

SIT50422 Diploma of Hospitality Management

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Victoria)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Western Australia)
Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (South Australia)
Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Tasmania)
Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Australian Capital Territory)
Food Safety Supervisor certificate requirements (New South Wales)
Food Standards Code — Standards 3.2.2 and 3.2.2A (food safety practices and food safety management tools)
Responsible Service of Gaming (RSG) training requirements (Victoria)
Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2020 (MA000009)
Restaurant Industry Award 2020 (MA000119)
National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 — Standards 1 to 11
Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025 (full text)

Do I have to do every level in order?

No. Entry depends on your experience and the pre-training review, and recognition of prior learning under Standard 1.6 can credit what you can already do.

Which level do employers ask for?

It tracks the role. Supervisory job ads generally expect Certificate IV; venue management roles a Diploma. Neither is a legal requirement — the legal requirements are the licensing credentials, not the qualification.

What is the pre-training review, and which Standard requires it?

Standard 2.2 of the Outcome Standards for RTOs: "VET students are advised, prior to enrolment, about the suitability of the training product for them, taking into account the student's skills and competencies." Its performance indicators require the RTO to review, before enrolment, your skills and competencies — including language, literacy and numeracy proficiency and digital literacy — and to advise you whether the product suits you, taking account of individual requirements including physical skills, prior experience, prerequisites and entry requirements.

Is that the same as Standard 2.2 of the National Code?

No, and this catches people searching for it. The National Code 2018 has its own Standard 2.2, which concerns assessing an overseas student's English, qualifications or work experience for course entry. It is a different provision for a different cohort. Always name the instrument.

When in the sequence will I be assessed on training other people?

Earlier than most people expect. SITXHRM007 Coach others in job skills is core in SIT30622, SIT30722, SIT30821 and SIT40422 — three Certificate IIIs as well as the Certificate IV. Coaching a colleague is treated as an operational skill rather than a supervisory one.

What will I actually have to do in the coaching unit?

Coach two different colleagues on the job. In each session you must address identified performance problems or difficulties and rectify or refer them, then evaluate the colleague's performance and give constructive feedback. You do it within commercial time constraints, applying the six key principles of training: explanation, demonstration, review, listening to the trainee's explanation, observing and evaluating their demonstration, and providing feedback.

What counts as a coaching "performance problem"?

The unit names five: a breakdown in communication, inappropriate circumstances for coaching, insufficient opportunity to practise, language or cultural barriers, and shyness or lack of confidence. Being able to describe how you handled one of those is stronger evidence than a general claim that you trained someone.

How do I know which award covers me?

By the premises, not your job title. Hotels, pubs, taverns, motels, resorts, casinos and caterers fall under MA000009. Not-for-profit registered clubs fall under MA000058. Standalone restaurants, cafes, night clubs, reception centres and roadhouses fall under MA000119. Takeaway and food-court outlets fall under MA000003.

I work in a club. Am I under the hospitality award?

No. MA000009 clause 4.4(d)(i) expressly excludes clubs registered or recognised under State or Territory legislation. A registered club is covered by MA000058, provided it is both registered under a liquor, gaming, associations or corporations statute and operating not-for-profit for members and the community.

I work in a night club. Is that the clubs award?

No — night clubs are covered by MA000119, the Restaurant Industry Award, because a night club is a commercial venue rather than a not-for-profit registered club.

What does a Certificate III actually change on my pay?

A relevant Certificate III or higher, used at work, sets a minimum classification of Level 4 under MA000009 (clause 18.1), MA000119 (clause 18.1) and MA000058 (clause 18.3). The fast food award, MA000003, has no equivalent provision.

Does the Level 4 floor work the same way in all three awards?

Nearly. MA000009 and MA000119 require you to make use of the skills derived from the Certificate III competencies — it is not automatic on completion. MA000058 states the floor for "AQF Certificate III qualifications" without the words "or higher", and adds that the Fair Work Commission may require you to demonstrate that you utilise the relevant skills.

If my employer disagrees about my classification, where does that go?

The dispute route depends on the award: clause 40 under MA000009, clause 34 under MA000119, and referral to the Fair Work Commission under MA000058.

How long can I be left at Introductory level?

Under MA000009, three months, extendable once by mutual agreement by a further three months. Six months is the maximum.

I covered a supervisor's shift. Am I paid for that?

Under MA000009 clause 22, two or more hours in a day at a higher classification attracts the higher rate for the whole day; less than two hours attracts it for the time worked. Food and beverage attendants grades 2 and 3 are excluded from that clause.

Is a qualification enough to let me serve alcohol?

No. RSA is a separate, state-regulated credential built on SITHFAB021, and in Victoria the unit alone is not the certificate — the Liquor Control Victoria second stage has to be completed as well.

Do I need an accredited food safety certificate to handle food?

Not as a matter of law. Standard 3.2.2A requires the training to cover four topics and to be completed before you engage in a prescribed activity; it does not require national accreditation, mandate a refresher, or require the business to keep records. The accredited unit gives you portability and proof.

What is the difference between RPL and credit transfer?

RPL (Standard 1.6) assesses evidence of skills and experience. Credit transfer (Standard 1.7) recognises an equivalent training product you have already completed, evidenced by AQF certification documentation or an authenticated VET transcript.

How many qualifications do you actually hold on scope?

17 qualifications, 81 skill sets and 579 units, every component at extent "Deliver and assess". One of the 17, SIR30216 Certificate III in Retail, has an end date of 28 June 2024 and is not available.

Can I study the Diploma outside Victoria?

Not with us. Our current delivery information lists both Diplomas as Victoria only. Note that the training.gov.au scope register itself carries no jurisdiction field, so state limits should be confirmed directly with us rather than read off the register.

What happens after AQF 5?

Nothing with us — AQF 5 is the ceiling. A Diploma commonly supports credit into a degree, but the university decides the amount.

Where do I check delivery in my state?

Ask through the course enquiry (/contact/) form, naming the qualification code and your state, or lodge an expression of interest (/eoi/).

Is a skill set worth doing instead of a full qualification?

It produces a Statement of Attainment, and under clause 2 of MA000009 a unit of competency can contribute to the appropriate level of training test. It is the lower-commitment way to test a direction — and there are 81 skill sets on scope, most of them unadvertised.