

How to Find the Best Chef for Your Kitchen - Complete Hospitality Training

Canonical: <https://cht.edu.au/news/how-to-find-best-chef-for-your-kitchen/>

Details:

Finding a chef is partly a hiring problem and partly a classification problem, and the second one is where the money is. Under the modern awards, what a cook or chef must be paid is driven by their trade status and their training, and the awards that cover kitchens do not describe that pathway the same way.

This page covers the classification ladder for kitchen roles, what the cookery qualifications actually contain so a resume can be read properly, what a competent recruitment and induction process is assessed on, the skilled migration pathway and its limits, the option of growing your own chef through an apprenticeship, and the verification an employer has to complete before the first shift.

Find applicants before assessing credentials

The original hiring guide suggests several routes to a chef shortlist: a hospitality recruiter, an internal candidate ready to step up, referrals from staff and local networks, or a clear public job advertisement. Describe the kitchen, role and shift pattern before screening applicants. Then use structured interviews, work references and a lawful paid skills assessment to test the cooking and team skills the role needs. The award, qualification and classification checks below belong in the same hiring process.

First, which award covers the kitchen

Coverage is determined by the premises, not the job. A commercial cook is a commercial cook in any setting; which award applies depends on where the kitchen sits.

The premises the kitchen sits in	Award
Hotel, pub, tavern, motel, resort, casino, or a contract caterer	MA000009 Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2020
A restaurant operating inside a hotel	MA000009
Standalone restaurant, cafe, bistro, reception centre, roadhouse	MA000119 Restaurant Industry Award 2020
A not-for-profit registered club — RSL, bowls, golf, community	MA000058 Registered and Licensed Clubs Award 2020
Takeaway or a food-court outlet	MA000003 Fast Food Industry Award 2010

Two boundaries are worth stating because both are counter-intuitive. A registered club kitchen is not MA000009 — clause 4.4(d)(i) of the hospitality award expressly excludes "clubs registered or recognised under State or Territory legislation", and a club under MA000058 must be both registered or licensed under a liquor, gaming, associations or corporations statute and operating not-for-profit for members and the community. And a night club is not MA000058 — being commercial rather than not-for-profit, it sits in MA000119.

A club kitchen is classified under MA000058's own classification schedule and a food-court kitchen under MA000003's, so read the schedule of the award that actually covers you.

The award difference that matters for kitchens

Between MA000009 and MA000119 the drafting diverges in a way that directly affects who you can hire and at what level:

	MA000009 (hotels, pubs)	MA000119 (standalone restaurants, cafes)
Apprenticeship trades recognised	Cooking trade and waiting trade	Cooking trade
Route to the Cook tradesperson grades	Apprenticeship or trade test	Apprenticeship, trade test, or the appropriate level of training

In a standalone restaurant, a Certificate III in Commercial Cookery graduate who did not go through an apprenticeship can be classified directly as a Cook grade 3 tradesperson. The hotel award's schedule does not say so on its face.

MA000119's own Table 3 — Minimum rates puts the trade grades at Level 4 and above:

MA000119 level	Classifications at that level
Level 3	Food and beverage attendant grade 3, Cook grade 2, Kitchen attendant grade 3, Clerical grade 2, Storeperson grade 2, Timekeeper/security officer grade 2, Handyperson
Level 4	Food and beverage attendant grade 4 (tradesperson) , Cook grade 3 (tradesperson) , Clerical grade 3, Storeperson grade 3
Level 5	Food and beverage supervisor, Cook grade 4 (tradesperson) , Clerical supervisor
Level 6	Cook grade 5 (tradesperson)

Three things follow from that table. Level 4 is the tradesperson tier in MA000119 , so the Certificate III classification floor lands on a grade the award itself labels "(tradesperson)" — a trade grade reached without serving an apprenticeship. Level 4 is also the award's own reference rate : MA000119 defines standard rate as "the minimum rate for a Level 4 classification (Cook grade 3 (tradesperson)) in Table 3—Minimum rates", so any penalty or allowance expressed as a percentage of the standard rate is calculated off that rate, and an error at Level 4 propagates. And Clerical grade 3 sits at Level 4 too , which is what makes a business qualification relevant to an administrative classification in a venue.

One reading caution on the first row of the comparison above. Naming a classification and recognising an apprenticeship in that trade are two different mechanisms . MA000119's Table 3 names a food and beverage tradesperson grade at Level 4; the apprenticeship trades an award recognises are a separate provision, and that row refers to the apprenticeship provision, not to the classification list. Do not read either one off the other.

The kitchen classification ladder

MA000009 and MA000119 both run an Introductory level plus Levels 1 to 6. The kitchen roles map like this:

Level	Kitchen classification	Training requirement
Level 1	Kitchen attendant grade 1	None
Level 2	Cook grade 1; kitchen attendant grade 2	Cook grade 1: none. Kitchen attendant grade 2: appropriate level of training
Level 3	Cook grade 2; kitchen attendant grade 3	Both require the appropriate level of training; kitchen attendant grade 3 additionally requires a supervisory course
Level 4	Cook (tradesperson) grade 3 — commis chef or equivalent	Apprenticeship, trade test, or the appropriate level of training
Level 5	Cook (tradesperson) grade 4 — demi chef or equivalent	As above
Level 6	Cook (tradesperson) grade 5 — chef de partie or equivalent, including general and specialised duties with supervision or training responsibilities	As above

Cook grade 1 at Level 2 covers cooking breakfasts and snacks, baking, pastry cooking or butchering, with no training requirement attached. Cook grade 2 at Level 3 is the same work with the appropriate level of training. The jump to Level 4 is the trade jump.

The Certificate III floor applies in three of the four awards. Under MA000009 and MA000119 (both at clause 18.1, adult rates) and MA000058 (clause 18.3), a relevant AQF Certificate III or higher used at work sets a minimum classification of Level 4 . The fast food award, MA000003 , has no equivalent provision .

Three distinctions matter. MA000009 and MA000119 require the employee to make use of the skills and knowledge derived from those Certificate III competencies in the work undertaken, so the floor is not automatic on completion — a cook who holds a Certificate III but is working solely as a kitchen attendant is in a different position from one plating on a section. MA000058 sets the floor for "AQF Certificate III qualifications" without the words "or higher", and adds that the Fair Work Commission may require the employee to demonstrate they utilise the relevant skills. And disputes route differently: MA000009 clause 40, MA000119 clause 34, and under MA000058 referral to the Fair Work Commission.

One further MA000009 provision is worth budgeting for before you build the roster. Under clause 22 , where an employee performs two or more hours in a day at a higher classification, the higher rate applies for the whole day ; for less than two hours it applies for the time worked only. Food and beverage attendants grades 2 and 3 are excluded from that provision. So covering a section above grade for half a shift is a classification event, not a favour.

Minimum rates are re-set periodically, typically operative from 1 July, so read the current figure from the award or the Fair Work Ombudsman's Pay and Conditions Tool.

What "the appropriate level of training" means, and which routes are still open

The term appears in the training-requirement column above at kitchen attendant grades 2 and 3, at Cook grade 2, and as a route to the tradesperson grades. MA000009 clause 2 defines it, and gives three limbs:

Limb	Route	Available today
(a)	Completing a training program that meets the requirements of a qualification, or one or more units of competency, from a training package	Yes
(b)	Assessment by a qualified skills assessor as having skills at least equivalent to those attained in such a training program	Yes
(c)	Having done the work of that classification for at least three months , as at 30 June 2010	No — closed

Limb (c) is a closed transitional provision anchored to 30 June 2010. It is not a rolling three-month test and cannot be newly satisfied. No cook who started that classification's work after that date reaches the appropriate level of training by length of service, so three months on a section is not a route to Cook grade 2, and it is certainly not a route to a tradesperson grade. That leaves limb (a) and limb (b), and both are the useful ones anyway: limb (a) is the completed cookery qualification, and limb (b) is why a skills assessment has real commercial value for a chef with overseas or undocumented experience — it converts demonstrable skill into the classification without repeating the training.

MA000119 has its own version of that third limb, with a different date. Where MA000009 reads "as at 30 June 2010", MA000119 reads "other than a Food and beverage attendant grade 2 ... as at 31 December 2009 ". Both are closed transitional provisions, neither is a rolling three-month test, and neither award's date applies to the other — so check the award that covers your premises rather than carrying a remembered date across, and read MA000058's and MA000003's own definitions the same way.

Clause 2 is also a different mechanism from the Certificate III floor above: the floor turns on holding a relevant Certificate III or higher and using those competencies at work, not on the appropriate level of training.

One more provision to keep in view: the Introductory level is capped at three months, extendable by mutual agreement for up to a further three. Six months is the ceiling, and the period is meant to be spent on training and competency assessment, not used as a rate.

Where trained cooks actually come from

The qualifications that matter here are SIT30821 Certificate III in Commercial Cookery and SIT40521 Certificate IV in Kitchen Management.

	SIT30821 Certificate III in Commercial Cookery	SIT40521 Certificate IV in Kitchen Management
Total units	25	33
Core units	20	27
Elective units	5 (3 from Group A or B; 2 from Group A, B or C)	6 (3 from Group A; 3 from the listed electives or any current endorsed training package)

What it is	The cooking trade qualification	Cooking plus running the kitchen: planning, costing, staff management
Our delivery states	SA, TAS, VIC, WA	VIC, WA
Entry requirements	None	—

SIT40521 is the largest qualification we deliver, and 27 of its 33 units are core , which means very little elective freedom. That cuts both ways when you are reading a resume. It means two holders of the qualification have covered almost identical ground, so the credential is a reliable signal. It also means a candidate part-way through has probably been working on core units, not optional extras.

Both are current on our scope of registration with an end date of 30 June 2032. For context on how much of the register that scope covers, we hold 17 current qualifications, 81 current skill sets and 579 current units , every current component at extent deliver and assess , with skill sets spanning hospitality, business, community services, health and infection control, retail, creative arts and horticulture. One of the 17, SIR30216 Certificate III in Retail, carries an end date of 28 June 2024 and is not available. Note also that SIT40521 was renamed from Commercial Cookery and is equivalent to the superseded SIT40516 , which matters if a candidate holds the older code, whereas SIT30821 is equivalent to its own predecessor.

The 20 core units of the Certificate III describe the actual scope of a trade-qualified cook, and reading them is a faster way to understand a candidate than asking what they can cook:

SITHCCC023 Use food preparation equipment

SITHCCC027 Prepare dishes using basic methods of cookery

SITHCCC028 Prepare appetisers and salads

SITHCCC029 Prepare stocks, sauces and soups

SITHCCC030 Prepare vegetable, fruit, egg and farinaceous dishes

SITHCCC031 Prepare vegetarian and vegan dishes

SITHCCC035 Prepare poultry dishes

SITHCCC036 Prepare meat dishes

SITHCCC037 Prepare seafood dishes

SITHCCC041 Produce cakes, pastries and breads

SITHCCC042 Prepare food to meet special dietary requirements

SITHCCC043 Work effectively as a cook

SITHKOP009 Clean kitchen premises and equipment

SITHKOP010 Plan and cost recipes

SITHPAT016 Produce desserts

SITXFSA005 Use hygienic practices for food safety

SITXFSA006 Participate in safe food handling practices

SITXHRM007 Coach others in job skills

SITXINV006 Receive, store and maintain stock

SITXWHS005 Participate in safe work practices

Three of those are worth pointing out to a hiring manager. SITHKOP010 Plan and cost recipes is core, so a trade-qualified cook has been assessed on costing, not only cooking. SITXHRM007 Coach others in job skills is core, which means every Certificate III cook has been assessed coaching two different colleagues on the job, addressing performance problems and giving constructive feedback in each

session, within commercial time constraints and applying the six key principles of training — explanation, demonstration, review, listening to the trainee's explanation, observing and evaluating their demonstration, and feedback. And SITXFSA006 requires demonstrated control of food hazards at each of nine critical control points — receiving, storing, preparing, processing, displaying, serving, packaging, transporting and disposing — plus the procedures to calibrate a temperature probe. That is a materially higher bar than a food handling certificate.

Electives in the Certificate III come from Group A (Cookery and Catering) or Group B (Asian Cookery), which is where specialisation shows: SITHCCC032 cook-chill and cook-freeze, SITHCCC038 buffets, SITHCCC039 pates and terrines, SITHCCC040 cheese, SITHPAT014 yeast-based bakery products, or the SITHASC Asian cookery units. Note that SITHCCC026 Package prepared foodstuffs carries SITXFSA005 as a prerequisite.

What a competent recruitment process is actually assessed on

Recruiting is itself a unit of competency, which is useful because it converts hiring opinion into a specified process. Three units on our scope describe it, and they set out what an assessor expects to see.

SITXHRM010 Recruit, select and induct staff is a core unit of SIT50322 Diploma of Event Management and an elective elsewhere. Its performance evidence requires the candidate to coordinate the recruitment, selection and induction process at least once for each of three different recruitment needs : casual, contract or temporary ; full-time or part-time permanent ; and volunteer roles . Its element on induction requires the programme to be planned to reflect organisational objectives and policies, and to be run in liaison with operational colleagues so it causes minimum operational disruption — which is the part most kitchens get wrong, by inducting a new chef during a service rather than around it.

The induction content the unit itself names is a usable checklist for a new head chef's first week: conditions of employment; contact details for departments and colleagues; the current organisational focus or initiatives; employee benefits, responsibilities and rights; enterprise culture, goals, objectives and vision; key organisational policies and procedures; industrial arrangements ; orientation information covering departmental locations, equipment, staff amenities, off-site operations and the whole premises; organisational charts; payroll information including awards and applicable pay rates, superannuation and wage payment arrangements ; policies and procedures specific to the job role; and work health and safety information.

Two business-package units on our scope go further. BSBHRM415 Coordinate recruitment and onboarding has five elements — plan for recruitment, screen and interview, assess and select, manage candidate outcomes, and onboard the successful candidate — and requires the candidate to coordinate the recruitment and onboarding of two candidates . Its performance criteria are specific in ways worth borrowing: establish the recruitment requirement and the authority to fill the position before advertising; conduct preliminary screening according to legislative requirements ; carry out a skills assessment relevant to the position ; assess candidates against specified selection criteria and referee reports ; inform all candidates of the decision and provide feedback to them; coordinate the documentation observing confidentiality and privacy requirements ; and make the administrative arrangements for pay and employee record keeping before the start date.

BSBHRM525 Manage recruitment and onboarding is the Diploma-level counterpart, also on our scope. It runs three elements — develop the recruitment and onboarding policies and procedures, manage the recruitment process, and manage staff onboarding — and requires the candidate to manage the process for two different individuals while updating the organisation's own policies and procedures . Its second element requires that advertising complies with legislation , that selection procedures comply with legislation , and that job offers and contracts of employment are prepared and provided promptly . For a venue that hires chefs repeatedly, that last unit is the one that turns an ad-hoc process into a documented one.

Growing your own chef: what an apprenticeship actually commits you to

Hiring a finished chef is one option; the other is training one, and the award sets out precisely what that costs in obligations rather than in dollars.

Where apprenticeship legislation allows competency-based progression and the training contract does not say otherwise, an apprentice indentured after 23 January 2020 progresses by stage rather than by year:

Stage	Trigger, on a four-year nominal term	Percentage of the standard rate
1	On commencement	55%
2	25% of the total competencies in the training plan, or 12 months, whichever is earlier	65%
3	50% of competencies, or 12 months after Stage 2, whichever is earlier	80%
4	75% of competencies, or 12 months after Stage 3, whichever is earlier	95%

Those percentages run off the award's standard rate, which is the Level 4 rate attached to Cook grade 3 (tradesperson). So a Level 4 classification error does not stay contained: it propagates to every apprentice on the payroll.

Progression can happen without you agreeing to it. An apprentice moves to the next stage when the training organisation, the employer and the apprentice agree the requirements are met, or where the employer has been given written advice that the RTO assessed the apprentice as meeting the requirements for all relevant units and has not notified disagreement within 21 days of receiving it. Silence for 21 days is deemed agreement, and the higher rate is payable from the first full pay period on or after that date. Filing the RTO's letter and doing nothing accrues an underpayment rather than avoiding one. Unresolved disputes go to the state apprenticeship authority — the VRQA in Victoria, Training Services NSW in New South Wales — and otherwise to the award's dispute clause. Both employer and apprentice have rights of referral.

Three further obligations are not discretionary, and each is a clause rather than a courtesy:

Clause 12.7(a) — the employer must release the apprentice to attend training or assessment without loss of pay or continuity of employment.

Clause 12.7(b) — time in training or assessment counts as time worked.

Clause 12.7(c) to (e) — the employer must reimburse the apprentice for all fees paid to a registered training organisation for required courses and for required textbooks the employer did not supply, due by the later of six months after the apprenticeship starts, six months after the relevant stage, or three months after the RTO's training starts, subject to satisfactory progress.

Rostering over an apprentice's training block, or discouraging attendance, is an award breach. And for an apprentice under 18, MA000009 clause 12.5 says the employer must not require overtime or shiftwork, though the apprentice may volunteer, with exceptions only in emergencies; MA000119 clauses 12.5 and 12.6 add that except in an emergency neither overtime nor shiftwork may be required if it would prevent attendance at training under the training agreement.

An adult apprentice who commenced on or after 1 January 2014 receives, in year one, the greater of 80% of the standard weekly rate or the ordinary first-year rate. An existing employee who becomes an adult apprentice with the same employer must not suffer a rate reduction, provided they had six months full-time or twelve months part-time or regular-casual service beforehand. That provision is what makes it viable to apprentice a kitchen attendant you already employ.

School-based apprentices are a separate arrangement, under Schedule D. Where the apprentice is still at school, paid off-the-job training time may be calculated as 25% of the actual hours worked each week on the job, and wages for training time may be averaged over the semester or the year rather than settled week by week. Total off-the-job training must equal what an equivalent full-time apprentice would receive over the period. The maximum duration is 6 years, and wage progression runs at 12 months' progression for every 2 years of employment, or on a competency basis. The point worth knowing before you offer one: on conversion to a full-time apprenticeship, both the completed competencies and the time already served count — so a school-based apprentice who finishes Year 12 and moves to full time does not restart.

If the arrangement is a traineeship rather than an apprenticeship, the numbers work differently again: a full-time traineeship is 38 ordinary hours a week with 20% of those hours being approved training, part-time is fewer hours with the same 20%, and under Schedule E of the Miscellaneous Award 2020 the delivery mode changes the lawful rate. Approved training delivered wholly off the job by an RTO attracts the schedule rate in full for each ordinary hour; training wholly on the job, or partly on and partly off, attracts the schedule rate less 20% (clause E.4.2(f)). A single line in the training plan describing the training as workplace-based therefore moves the employer onto a different calculation, which is why the training plan should be read as a pay document.

Recognition of prior learning is usually the faster route

For an experienced chef with no Australian paperwork, recognition of prior learning is the lever. Registered training organisations must offer RPL under Standard 1.6 of the standards for RTOs, it is raised at the pre-training review under Standard 2.2 of the Outcome Standards for RTOs as an individual assessment for that learner, and it is a genuine assessment against the same evidence requirements as classroom delivery, not a waiver or a discount. Credit transfer is the separate process under Standard 1.7, which recognises a unit already completed at any RTO on the evidence of AQF certification documentation or an authenticated VET transcript, with no reassessment. We first verify the evidence and equivalence, check that the units fit your training product, and check for licensing or regulatory restrictions before granting credit. See ASQA's credit-transfer guidance.

On a 33-unit qualification like SIT40521, where 27 units are core, a chef with ten years on a hot line may already hold a substantial proportion. The honest position is that nobody can tell you how much until the pre-training review is done, because RPL is assessed per learner against their own evidence. What can be said is that the gap is usually smaller than the candidate expects, and that a partly-RPL'd qualification finishes considerably faster than a full one.

This matters for retention as well as recruitment. A sous chef you would otherwise lose is often easier to keep with a funded pathway to Certificate IV in Kitchen Management than with a counter-offer — and, under MA000009, MA000119 or MA000058, finishing it and using the competencies moves their classification floor.

The skilled migration route, and its real limits

Chef and Cook are among the small number of hospitality occupations with a skilled-migration pathway, and we are an appointed Trades Recognition Australia provider for exactly two of them. Read the limits before building a hiring plan on it.

Occupation	ANZSCO	ANZSCO skill level	On the Core Skills Occupation List	CHT TRA appointment
Chef	351311	2	Yes, item 386	Yes — TSS and OSAP
Cook	351411	3	Yes, item 387	Yes — TSS and OSAP
Cafe or Restaurant Manager	141111	2	No	No

That last row is worth knowing before you build a sponsorship plan around a venue manager. Cafe or Restaurant Manager is not on the Core Skills Occupation List, so the pathway that exists for a chef does not exist for a manager. Chef and Cook both attract Skills in Demand (subclass 482) Core Skills stream sponsorship. Note also that the two unit groups exclude each other: Cooks, Fast Food Cooks and Kitchenhands are excluded from the Chef group, and Chefs, Fast Food Cooks and Kitchenhands are excluded from the Cook group.

The limitation that matters most, stated plainly. Home Affairs applies caveats to Chef and Cook in certain circumstances — fast food outlets, limited-service restaurants, and business size are the ones named. Those caveats have not been retrieved for this page, and they could materially narrow the practical pathway. Nothing here should be read as saying the pathway is clear for a given venue: a small limited-service restaurant may find that the occupation is on the list and the position still does not qualify. Verify the current caveats with the Department of Home Affairs before making an offer or committing to sponsorship costs.

The experience bar is substantial, and it is the second place plans fail. For both Chef and Cook, Trades Recognition Australia expects current culinary experience, skills and knowledge in Western cuisine, and employment in the nominated occupation full-time and paid for a minimum of 12 months within the past three years before lodging. On top of that currency requirement sits a total-experience bar that depends on formal training: three years of relevant full-time paid work experience with formal culinary training, or five years without. Every claim needs original and verifiable documentary evidence — employment letters, contracts, payslips, income statements, tax returns, award certificates and transcripts — so a candidate with a strong career and thin paperwork is a slower application than a candidate with the reverse.

For Chef specifically, TRA looks for a candidate ideally currently operating as a Senior Chef with kitchen management responsibility for at least 12 months full-time paid, with evidence of cumulative progression from Cook or Commis Chef to Chef de Partie to Senior Chef de Partie, Sous Chef or Head Chef, and competency in kitchen management duties: planning and monitoring cooking operations, managing finances within a budget, designing and costing menus, catering for special dietary requirements, and writing staff rosters. Two pathways exist — one without an Australian VET qualification and one with — and each runs a documentary-evidence stage and a technical-interview stage.

On qualifications, TRA accepts SIT30821 Certificate III in Commercial Cookery for Cook, and SIT40521 Certificate IV in Kitchen Management for Chef and Cook. SIT20421 Certificate II in Cookery is not accepted by TRA for any occupation — it is a pre-vocational entry point. At least three years of relevant experience may substitute for formal qualifications for Chef, and in some cases experience or on-the-job training is required in addition to the qualification rather than instead of it.

One structural limit that catches employers planning a management hire. TRA assesses tradespersons and technicians only; management occupations are assessed by other authorities. So our TRA appointment does not extend to a SIT50422 Diploma of Hospitality Management or SIT40422 Certificate IV in Hospitality graduate, even though both qualifications lead to management roles. We operate a skills assessment service for the two trade occupations — see skills assessment — and that

is the boundary of it.

For nationally recognised training, a Unique Student Identifier (USI) is generally required before a qualification or Statement of Attainment can be issued, unless an applicable exemption applies. See the official USI exemption guidance. A USI is free at usi.gov.au. If you already have one, recover it rather than creating another.

What to actually assess

A trade certificate tells you someone has been assessed as competent. It does not tell you whether they can hold a pass on a Saturday night, cost a menu, or keep a section clean under pressure. Trial on a real service and watch the section, not the plate. A trial in which the candidate performs productive work is work, and the award applies to it.

Then verify the compliance items before the roster is written, not before the shift starts.

Food safety. Under Standard 3.2.2A, which commenced 8 December 2023, a food business must appoint a certified Food Safety Supervisor before engaging in a prescribed activity. The certificate must have been issued within the immediately preceding five years, and the supervisor must remain reasonably available, meaning on site or easily contacted, for instance by phone. If the chef you are hiring is to be the Food Safety Supervisor, check the issue date, not just the existence of a certificate.

Any venue with a kitchen that processes unpackaged potentially hazardous food into food that is both potentially hazardous and ready to eat is a category one business. Category one carries the third tool as well: substantiation records, kept for three months after being made and accessible at the premises. A new head chef inheriting a kitchen with no temperature records is inheriting a live compliance gap.

In New South Wales the Food Safety Supervisor certificate must come from a provider approved by the NSW Food Authority under section 106H of the Food Act 2003 (NSW). We are not on that list and cannot issue a NSW FSS certificate. In NSW the approved provider issues two documents, the national Statement of Attainment and the FSS certificate; keeping only the Statement of Attainment does not satisfy section 106G.

Work health and safety. Kitchens are where the injuries are. The hazards a head chef is expected to control include manual handling from deliveries, stockpots and kegs; lacerations and amputations from slicers, mixers and knives; burns from hot surfaces, liquids and chemicals; slips on wet and greasy floors; electricity, including damaged leads and the cleaning of electrical cooking equipment; chemical exposure from degreasers and sanitisers; noise from extraction and dishwashers; and heat stress and fatigue across long services.

The controls a competent chef should already expect: guards fitted and interlocked on machinery, equipment isolated before cleaning or clearing, test-and-tag records maintained, RCD protection, never cleaning energised electrical equipment, an accessible Safety Data Sheet register, correct chemical dilution, PPE and eyewash where chemicals are used, and every decanted chemical labelled.

Which Act governs depends on the state. Victoria operates under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic), administered by WorkSafe Victoria, where the primary duty sits at section 21. New South Wales operates under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW), administered by SafeWork NSW, where the duty holder is a person conducting a business or undertaking and the primary duty sits at section 19(1). Both require the provision of information, instruction, training and supervision, and both use the "reasonably practicable" standard. Neither duty can be transferred by contract to a head chef, however senior.

Supervision is also expected to be proportionate to experience, which bears directly on an apprentice or a new starter: workers under 18, apprentices and trainees, new staff and high-risk tasks all attract more supervision, not the same amount.

A candidate who talks fluently about guarding, isolation and SDS access without being prompted is telling you something useful about how their last kitchen ran.

Related reading

Qualification pages: Certificate III in Commercial Cookery , Certificate IV in Kitchen Management , and for front-of-house supervision Certificate IV in Hospitality . Compliance training sits at Food Safety Supervisor and food handling .

On hiring generally: 5 tips to hiring hospitality staff and 4 common mistakes employers make when hiring . On keeping the kitchen staffed: cross-training , building a training plan and rostering and time management . Also useful: health and safety best practice , what hospitality jobs are in demand , reasons the industry takes training seriously and the Standard 3.2.2A explainer .

About us

We are Complete Hospitality Training , RTO 3722, CRICOS 04242E. Legal name Complete Hospitality Training (Vic) Pty Ltd , ABN 27 006 947 262 , ACN 006 947 262 . Registered as RTO 3722 since 1 June 1994 , transferred from the Victorian regulator to the national regulator, ASQA, on 8 September 2017 , with the current registration period running 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2032 . Level 3, 28 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne VIC 3000, and 410 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010. Contact melbourne@cht.edu.au or +61 3 9654 1554 . Confirm current course, scope and fee arrangements directly.

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.

SIT40521 Certificate IV in Kitchen Management

SIT30821 Certificate III in Commercial Cookery

SITXFSA006 Participate in safe food handling practices

SITXFSA005 Use hygienic practices for food safety

SITXHRM007 Coach others in job skills

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)

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)

Unique Student Identifier (USI) requirements for RTOs

Does a chef need an apprenticeship?

Not necessarily. In a standalone restaurant under MA000119, the appropriate level of training is an explicit route to the tradesperson grades, and MA000119's Table 3 labels Level 4 "Cook grade 3 (tradesperson)" — a trade grade reachable without an apprenticeship. In a hotel under MA000009, the

schedule names apprenticeship or trade test, though a relevant Certificate III used at work still sets a Level 4 floor.

What sits at Level 4 under MA000119?

Food and beverage attendant grade 4 (tradesperson), Cook grade 3 (tradesperson), Clerical grade 3 and Storeperson grade 3. Level 4 is the tradesperson tier, and MA000119 defines its own standard rate as the minimum rate for a Level 4 classification (Cook grade 3 (tradesperson)) in Table 3.

Which award covers a kitchen in a registered club?

MA000058 Registered and Licensed Clubs Award 2020, not MA000009. The hospitality award expressly excludes clubs registered or recognised under State or Territory legislation at clause 4.4(d)(i). MA000058 has its own classification schedule, though it carries the same Level 4 Certificate III floor at clause 18.3.

Which award covers a night club kitchen?

MA000119. A night club is commercial rather than not-for-profit, so the clubs award does not cover it despite the name.

Does the Level 4 floor apply in every award?

No. It applies under MA000009, MA000119 and MA000058. The fast food award, MA000003, has no equivalent provision.

Is the Level 4 floor automatic once a cook finishes a Certificate III?

Not under MA000009 or MA000119. Both require the employee to make use of the skills and knowledge derived from those competencies in the work undertaken. MA000058 omits "or higher" from its wording and allows the Fair Work Commission to require the employee to demonstrate they utilise the relevant skills.

If a cook covers a higher-graded section for part of a shift, does the rate change?

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

Can three months on a section give a cook the appropriate level of training?

No, not for anyone who started in recent years. The three-month route is the third limb of the definition and it is anchored to a closed date in each award — 30 June 2010 in MA000009, and 31 December 2009 in MA000119. It is a closed transitional provision, not a rolling three-month test, so it cannot be newly satisfied. The two open routes are completing the training program, or assessment by a qualified skills assessor as having at least equivalent skills.

Do MA000009 and MA000119 use the same date for that limb?

No, and this is worth checking rather than assuming. MA000009 reads "as at 30 June 2010". MA000119 reads "other than a Food and beverage attendant grade 2 ... as at 31 December 2009". Neither award's date applies to the other, and MA000058 and MA000003 should be read on their own terms too.

Can a skills assessor get an experienced cook to a tradesperson grade without an apprenticeship?

That is what the second limb is for: a qualified skills assessor finding that the person has skills at least equivalent to those attained in the relevant training program. It is a formal equivalence assessment against the training, not a manager's opinion that the cook is good on a section, and under MA000119 the appropriate level of training is an express route to the tradesperson grades.

How does an apprentice's rate move, and can it move without us agreeing?

Stages run at 55%, 65%, 80% and 95% of the standard rate for apprentices indentured after 23 January 2020, triggered at 25%, 50% and 75% of the training plan's competencies or at 12-month intervals, whichever comes first. And yes, it can move without your agreement: if the RTO gives you written advice that the apprentice has been assessed as meeting the requirements for all relevant units and you do not notify disagreement within 21 days, agreement is deemed and the higher rate is payable from the first full pay period on or after that date.

Do we have to pay an apprentice for time in training, and pay their course fees?

Yes to both. Clause 12.7(a) requires release without loss of pay or continuity of employment, clause 12.7(b) makes that time count as time worked, and clause 12.7(c) to (e) requires the employer to reimburse all fees paid to an RTO for required courses and required textbooks the employer did not supply, subject to satisfactory progress.

Can we apprentice a kitchen hand we already employ without cutting their pay?

That is what the adult apprentice provision is for. An apprentice who commenced on or after 1 January 2014 receives, in year one, the greater of 80% of the standard weekly rate or the ordinary first-year rate, and an existing employee who becomes an adult apprentice with the same employer must not suffer a rate reduction, provided they had six months full-time or twelve months part-time or regular-casual service beforehand.

Can we take on a school-based apprentice in the kitchen?

Yes, under Schedule D, which runs differently from a standard apprenticeship. Paid off-the-job training time may be calculated as 25% of the actual hours worked each week on the job, wages for training time may be averaged over the semester or the year, the maximum duration is 6 years, and wage progression runs at 12 months' progression for every 2 years of employment or on a competency basis. Total off-the-job training must still equal what an equivalent full-time apprentice would receive. The point that matters when they leave school: on conversion to full time, both the completed competencies and the time already served count, so they do not restart.

How much of a traineeship has to be actual training?

20% of ordinary hours, whether full-time or part-time. Full-time is 38 ordinary hours a week with 20% of those hours as approved training. The delivery mode then changes the rate: wholly off the job through

an RTO attracts the full schedule rate, while wholly on the job or a mix attracts the schedule rate less 20% under Schedule E clause E.4.2(f).

How long does a chef need to have worked to be assessed by TRA?

There are two separate bars. Currency: employed in the nominated occupation full-time and paid for at least 12 months within the past three years before lodging. Total experience: three years of relevant full-time paid work with formal culinary training, or five years without. Every claim needs original and verifiable documentary evidence.

Is the migration pathway for a chef straightforward?

No, and this page will not tell you it is. Home Affairs applies caveats to Chef and Cook in certain circumstances, including fast food outlets, limited-service restaurants and business size, and those caveats have not been retrieved here — they could materially narrow the practical pathway for a particular venue. Confirm the current caveats with the Department of Home Affairs before relying on the occupation being on the list.

Can a restaurant manager be sponsored the way a chef can?

Not through the same pathway. Cafe or Restaurant Manager, ANZSCO 141111, is not on the Core Skills Occupation List. Our TRA appointment (<https://www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au/skills-assessment>) covers Chef (351311) and Cook (351411). It does not cover Cafe or Restaurant Manager; migration pathways and assessing authorities depend on the nominated occupation.

Can a Diploma of Hospitality Management graduate use your TRA appointment?

No. Our appointment covers Chef and Cook. Our TRA appointment does not cover hospitality-management occupations, so a SIT50422 Diploma of Hospitality Management or SIT40422 Certificate IV in Hospitality graduate falls outside that appointment even though both qualifications lead to management roles.

Does Certificate II in Cookery count for a skills assessment?

No. SIT20421 Certificate II in Cookery is not accepted by TRA for any occupation. It is a pre-vocational entry point. TRA accepts SIT30821 for Cook and SIT40521 for Chef and Cook.

What is the difference between Certificate III and Certificate IV here?

Certificate III in Commercial Cookery, SIT30821, is 25 units with 20 core, and is the cooking trade qualification. Certificate IV in Kitchen Management, SIT40521, is 33 units with 27 core, and adds planning, costing and staff management — running the kitchen rather than working in it.

Who can assess overseas chef qualifications?

Trades Recognition Australia appointed providers. We are appointed for Chef and Cook under both the TSS and Offshore Skills Assessment programs.

Is Certificate III in Commercial Cookery CRICOS-registered with you?

No. Only three of our courses are CRICOS-registered: SIT40422 (116358F), SIT50322 (118427D) and SIT50422 (115534C). Neither dedicated cookery qualification is on CRICOS, so it is not available to student visa holders through us.

Can an experienced chef skip units?

Not skip, but potentially be recognised. Recognition of prior learning is a genuine assessment against the same evidence requirements, offered under Standard 1.6 and raised at the pre-training review under Standard 2.2 of the Outcome Standards for RTOs. Credit transfer under Standard 1.7 is the separate route for a unit already completed at any RTO, which needs no reassessment. An experienced chef may already hold a substantial share of a 33-unit qualification, but the amount is determined per learner. We first verify the evidence and equivalence, check that the units fit your training product, and check for licensing or regulatory restrictions before granting credit.

What does a recruitment process look like if it is done to the competency standard?

SITXHRM010 requires coordinating recruitment, selection and induction for three different recruitment needs, including volunteer roles. BSBHRM415 requires establishing the authority to fill the position before advertising, screening according to legislative requirements, assessing against specified criteria and referee reports, informing all candidates and giving them feedback, and arranging pay and record keeping before the start date. BSBHRM525 adds that advertising and selection must comply with legislation and that contracts of employment are provided promptly.

What should a new chef's induction cover?

SITXHRM010 names the content: conditions of employment, contact details, current organisational focus, employee benefits, responsibilities and rights, enterprise culture and goals, key policies and procedures, industrial arrangements, orientation to locations, equipment and amenities, organisational charts, payroll information including awards and applicable pay rates, superannuation and wage payment arrangements, role-specific procedures, and work health and safety information. The unit also requires it to be scheduled in liaison with operational colleagues so it causes minimum operational disruption.

What does a Certificate III cook already know about food safety?

More than a food handling certificate covers. SITXFSA005 and SITXFSA006 are both core, and SITXFSA006 requires demonstrated hazard control at nine critical control points plus temperature probe calibration.

Has a trade-qualified cook been assessed on training others?

Yes. SITXHRM007 Coach others in job skills is core in the Certificate III, and requires on-the-job coaching of two different colleagues, including addressing performance problems and giving constructive feedback in each session, within commercial time constraints and applying the six key principles of training.

Are there entry requirements for Certificate III in Commercial Cookery?

No entry requirements apply to the Certificate III qualifications. Language, literacy and numeracy support needs are identified at the pre-training review.

Can you deliver Certificate IV in Kitchen Management in New South Wales?

Not on current scope. Certificate IV in Kitchen Management is on our scope for Victoria and Western Australia. Certificate III in Commercial Cookery covers South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia.

Does a chef holding SIT40516 need to redo the qualification?

No. SIT40521 Certificate IV in Kitchen Management is equivalent to the superseded SIT40516, so the older code is not invalidated.

Does the head chef carry the WHS duty?

The primary duty sits with the employer or PCBU and cannot be transferred by contract. A head chef carries supervisory obligations and, in practice, implements the controls, but the duty itself stays with the business. Supervision is also expected to be proportionate to experience, so an apprentice or a new starter attracts more of it.

Do we need to keep temperature records?

If the business is category one under Standard 3.2.2A, yes. Substantiation records covering receipt, storage, processing, cooling, reheating, display, transport and the cleaning and sanitising of food-contact surfaces must be kept for three months and be accessible at the premises.

What if the chef we want has no Unique Student Identifier?

One can be created free of charge, but if they studied in Australia from 2015 onwards they already have one. Recover the existing USI rather than creating a second, because duplicates split the training history.