

Why January Is the Perfect Time to Invest in Your Hospitality Career - Complete Hospitality Training

Canonical: <https://cht.edu.au/news/why-january-is-the-perfect-time-to-invest-in-your-hospitality-career/>

Details:

December is the industry's largest unofficial assessment period. Venues run at or near capacity for weeks, and by the time the last function is cleared, managers know exactly who held their nerve, who could run a section unsupervised, and who was carried by the people around them. January is when that judgement turns into decisions — about rosters, about who is offered permanent hours, and about who is given a section of their own.

There are also three things that genuinely reset or come due in January rather than at any other point in the year, and they are the reason this is a timing argument rather than a motivational one.

What the peak actually reveals

Peak trade exposes the distance between knowing a job and being able to do it at pace. The gaps that show up are rarely exotic. They are timing, sequencing, confidence at the bar, comfort with a difficult table, and the ability to run a shift when the supervisor is pulled away. Anyone who spent December aware of a specific gap has something better than a vague ambition: a defined thing to fix, while the memory of it is still fresh.

The training package agrees with that diagnosis, incidentally. It does not assess service skills by written test. SITHFAB027 Serve food and beverage requires five service periods, at least one of which must be a peak period . SITHFAB034 Provide table service requires twelve service periods, with full menu advice given in every one . SITHFAB030 cocktails requires three service periods plus two cocktails by each of six methods — twelve preparations minimum. SITHFAB025 espresso requires ten specified beverages on three occasions each . Repetition under real pressure is the assessment method, which is why a December spent working is not wasted time, it is the raw material.

Reset one: the Skills First calendar-year counter

This is the most concrete January fact on this page. Victorian subsidised training under Skills First caps volume per calendar year :

- a maximum of two skill sets ;
- a maximum of two AQF qualifications ;
- a maximum of two programs at a time .

And critically, programs scheduled to commence later in the same calendar year count towards those limits , not just the ones already underway. So someone who used both places in the back half of one year has them again in January — and someone planning two programs for a single year needs to sequence them with that cap in mind rather than discover it in October.

The rest of the eligibility structure, for planning: you must be an Australian citizen, permanent visa holder or New Zealand citizen ; you must enrol and commence within the contract period, which for the current contract runs to 31 December 2026 inclusive ; and you must undertake all training and assessment while physically present in Victoria or in a listed border-region postcode . There is no

general online or interstate concession — the single exception is a temporary interstate or overseas practical placement , during which online training and assessment is permitted, capped at no more than 50% of total scheduled hours . One further limb: a person who is 20 or over at the reference date must not already hold a qualification higher than Certificate I .

This page is not your eligibility determination. We hold a Victorian Skills First VET Funding Contract, and the provider determines a learner's subsidy eligibility and holds the evidence for that determination — so ask them about your own position. The authoritative reference is the Victorian Government's own eligibility indicator , not any provider's website. Delivery in New South Wales is fee-for-service and unsubsidised.

This page carries no fees and no "valued at" figures. Confirm the current fee directly.

Concessions, fee waivers and the rules for under-17s

Two parts of the Skills First structure are routinely missed by the people they were designed for, and both are better settled in January than discovered at enrolment.

A concession is a mandatory reduction, not a discretionary discount. Providers must offer concessions to eligible students, and the concession fee is capped at no more than 20% of the standard tuition fee . That is a proportional ceiling set by the funding contract, not a goodwill gesture a provider is free to withhold. No amount is printed here, because the cap is expressed as a percentage of whatever the standard tuition fee for that program is.

A full fee waiver - complete exemption from tuition fees, not a reduction - must be offered to four named groups :

| Group entitled to a full fee waiver | | --- | | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students | | Youth Access Initiative students | | Students from the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre | | Young people on community-based orders |

Providers are compensated for concessions and waivers through loadings, which is why the obligation sits on the provider rather than on the student to negotiate.

Still at school, or under 17. Clause 2.11 of the funding contract makes a student enrolled in any school - government, non-government, independent or Catholic - not eligible for a Skills First subsidy, unless they are a school-based apprentice or trainee. That is a subsidy rule, not an enrolment bar: such a student is not prevented from enrolling and paying fees.

A person under 17 at commencement needs something further, an exemption from school attendance , unless they are a school-based apprentice or trainee or have completed Year 12 or its equivalent. The exemption has a specific shape:

| Requirement | Detail | | --- | --- | | Load | Full-time training - at least 25 hours per week , excluding travel, term breaks and public holidays - or training combined with employment | | Content | Must identify the provider and the training | | Who signs | The Regional Director , where the person has not completed Year 10 or has never enrolled in a Victorian school; the school principal or the Regional Director where Year 10 is complete | | Provider duty | Sight the exemption and retain it |

There is also an exit-notification duty on the provider. If an under-17 exemption student stops attending, or completes while still under 17, the provider must notify the Department of Education Regional Office and, where applicable, the student's previous Victorian school.

Reset two: the Introductory level clock on your December hire date

If you started in a venue in November as extra hands for the peak, there is an award clock running that almost nobody mentions — but first, which award.

The premises decides, not the job title , and there are four possibilities:

| Where you work | Award | | --- | --- | | Hotels, pubs, taverns, motels, resorts, casinos, caterers, accommodation | 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, 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. Two traps, both of which matter to December casuals because the function and party trade spreads across all four: clubs are not covered by MA000009 — clause 4.4(d)(i) excludes "clubs registered or recognised under State or Territory legislation" by name, and a registered club sits under MA000058 where it is both registered under a liquor, gaming, associations or corporations statute and operating not-for-profit for members and the community — and night clubs are not clubs , because a night club is commercial and falls under MA000119 . If your December work was a run of New Year shifts across a pub, an RSL and a night club, that was three awards.

The MA000009 clock

Under MA000009 , Introductory level is for an employee entering the industry who does not yet demonstrate the competency requirements of Level 1. The employee remains there 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 they move to Level 1 , unless employee and employer mutually agree that further training of up to three months is required. Six months is the absolute maximum.

A November start means that first three-month period expires in February . January is therefore exactly the right moment to ask where your assessment for Level 1 stands — not a pushy question, a scheduled one. Introductory level is not an indefinite holding classification, and it is not the trainee arrangement either: a trainee under a registered training contract is paid under the National Training Wage instead.

MA000058, MA000119 and MA000003 each have their own Schedule A, so if your venue is a club, a cafe or a food-court outlet, check the entry-level provisions of that award rather than assuming this clock applies.

Reset three: the higher duties record from December, while it is still provable

During a peak, people cover shifts above their classification constantly. That is not a favour with no mechanism behind it.

Under clause 22 of MA000009, 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 January task is documentary: write down the dates, the hours and the work, while the rosters still exist and the people who saw it are still employed there. That record does two jobs. It supports a higher duties position, and it becomes the workplace evidence that recognition of prior learning is assessed against later. A December spent doing supervisory tasks without the title is exactly the kind of evidence worth putting forward.

While you are at it: under clause 3.3 your employer must make the award and the National Employment Standards available to all employees, on a noticeboard or by accessible electronic means. And under clause 14 the employer must classify every employee in accordance with Schedule A. The MA000009 structure is an Introductory level plus Levels 1 to 6, across five streams — food and beverage, kitchen, guest services, clerical and casino gaming.

No rates are printed here. Award rates re-set every 1 July, so use the Fair Work Ombudsman's Pay and Conditions Tool against the award code that covers your venue.

The hiring cycle turns early in the year

Venues staff up for December with casuals and short-term hands. The new year is when the permanent shape of the team is settled, and when supervisory and management vacancies created by post-peak turnover get filled. Being visibly in training at that moment is a different proposition from saying that study is planned for some point later.

And there is a specific thing to have in hand at that conversation. A relevant AQF Certificate III or higher, used at work, sets a minimum classification of Level 4 in three of the four awards above:

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

That is useful in January precisely because December is when people move between venues. Whichever of those three you land in, the floor comes with you. Only the fast food award has no equivalent provision.

Under MA000119 the floor is also a named trade grade: Schedule A defines Level 4 as "Food and beverage attendant grade 4 (tradesperson)" and "Cook grade 3 (tradesperson)", and the Level 4 rate is that award's standard rate. Under MA000009 the kitchen stream likewise places Level 4 at Cook (tradesperson) grade 3, and Level 4 is that award's own reference point, the standard rate from which apprentice percentages are calculated. So finishing a relevant Certificate III and using it at work is a route to a tradesperson grade without serving an apprenticeship — which is a rather stronger new-year proposition than "I am thinking about doing a course".

Three differences to keep straight, since this is a pay entitlement:

MA000009 and MA000119 require you to make use of the skills and knowledge derived from the Certificate III competencies. Finishing alone is not the test.

MA000058 states 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 that they utilise the relevant skills.

Dispute routes differ: clause 40 under MA000009, clause 34 under MA000119, and referral to the Fair Work Commission under MA000058.

Usefully for anyone part-way through, clause 2's "appropriate level of training" test under MA000009 is satisfied by a qualification or one or more appropriate units of competency forming part of a training package — so part-completed study and individual units both carry weight, and a skill set is not a token.

Quieter trade makes study realistic

For most operators the weeks after the peak are the lightest of the year. Shifts are shorter, rosters are more predictable, and there is capacity to absorb a study commitment that would be impossible in November. Blended delivery helps here: knowledge components can be worked through around shifts, with practical sessions scheduled into the quieter part of the calendar. See how to balance education, work and life and getting the most out of your training.

Match the qualification to the next step, not the current one

The ladder is straightforward. Certificate III is operational, Certificate IV is supervisory, and the Diploma sits at AQF level 5, where management study begins.

| Step | Qualification | Units (core) | Availability | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Operational | SIT30622 Certificate III in Hospitality | 15 (6) | All eight states and territories | | Operational, front of house | SIT30722 Certificate III in Hospitality (Restaurant Front of House) | 20 (9) | All eight states and territories | | Supervisory | SIT40422 Certificate IV in Hospitality | 21 (9) | All eight states and territories | | Supervisory, cross-industry | BSB40520 Certificate IV in Leadership and Management | 12 (5) | All eight states and territories | | Management | SIT50422 Diploma of Hospitality Management | 28 (11) | Victoria only |

Two details that change the choice. In SIT30722 , RSA (SITHFAB021) and processing financial transactions (SITXFIN007) are core rather than elective — relevant if a bar or floor job is the target. And in SIT40422 , three of the nine core units are human resources units : coaching others in job skills, rostering staff, and leading and managing people. That is what changes at the supervisory step.

Note though that the Level 4 pay floor above attaches at Certificate III , not Certificate IV. If the January objective is a better classification rather than a supervisory title, the operational qualification is the one that moves it.

The Victoria-only restriction on SIT50422 is worth checking before building a plan around it, and SIT50322 Diploma of Event Management — 20 units with 13 core — carries the same restriction. Worth knowing where to check, though: the training.gov.au scope register for RTO 3722 carries no jurisdiction field against any component , so the state limits in the table above come from our own delivery information and should be confirmed with us rather than read off the national register.

What the register does tell you is the size of the scope: 17 current qualifications, 81 current skill sets and 579 current units , every component at extent "Deliver and assess". One of the 17, SIR30216 Certificate III in Retail, carries an end date of 28 June 2024 and is not available. We deliver to AQF 5 and no higher — there is no Advanced Diploma. A Diploma commonly supports credit into a degree, but the amount of advanced standing is the university's decision.

An RSA Statement of Attainment is a national training record, but permission to serve alcohol depends on the destination's rules. NSW permits eligible temporary interstate workers; permanent movers and security or RSA marshal roles must meet NSW training and competency-card requirements, using bridging where eligible. Victoria offers bridging to eligible interstate holders. SA applies approved-provider rules to training from 1 November 2020, with earlier training not required to be repeated solely for that change. QLD and WA require suitable national RSA evidence. Tasmania distinguishes staff from licence holders; the ACT and NT have local currency and refresher requirements. Check the regulator before your first shift. See RSA recognition by jurisdiction , NSW's rules and SA's rules . Victorian Responsible Service of Gambling is government training ; see our RSA guidance for the separate alcohol requirements.

What to work out before enrolling

Every learner completes a pre-training review before enrolling, and that is a regulatory obligation with a named source. Standard 2.2 of the Outcome Standards for RTOs 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." Its performance indicators 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 digital literacy - and then to advise each prospective student whether the product suits them. The review must also take account of individual requirements including physical skills, prior experience, prerequisites and entry requirements .

Name the instrument when you check this. The National Code 2018 also has a Standard 2.2 , and it is a different provision for a different cohort: the assessment of an overseas student's English proficiency, qualifications or work experience for course entry.

Our own enrolment conditions

Separately from the Standards, we set conditions of our own, and we are the authority on those. The following are our enrolment policy, not regulatory requirements:

Learners are expected to have language, literacy and numeracy skills at around ACSF Level 3 , equivalent to senior secondary school level. We apply that expectation across multiple qualifications, including Certificate III and Certificate IV in hospitality, business, and leadership and management.

An LLN assessment is completed during application and enrolment, to determine the learner's ACSF level, identify support needs and inform the training strategy.

That assessment sits inside our Pre-Training Review , which is also where RPL and credit-transfer opportunities are identified.

The minimum age at commencement is 16 .

How long a qualification takes

The defensible answer is the AQF volume of learning, which is set independently of delivery mode :

| Qualification level | AQF volume of learning | | --- | --- | | Certificate II | 0.5 to 1 year | | Certificate III | 1 to 2 years | | Certificate IV | 0.5 to 2 years | | Diploma | 1 to 2 years |

The Certificate IV range is wide because the AQF allows flexibility for short specialist qualifications building on prior knowledge. The volume must be sufficient for a graduate to achieve the learning outcomes, and the regulator specifically names "accelerating or shortening training without allowing students sufficient time for skill development and knowledge application" as a risk. A course advertised as dramatically shorter than the AQF range is a question to ask, not a feature to admire.

RPL and credit transfer are not the same thing

The pre-training review is where recognition of prior learning (Standard 1.6) and credit transfer (Standard 1.7) opportunities are identified. They work differently:

| | RPL (Standard 1.6) | Credit transfer (Standard 1.7) | | --- | --- | --- | | What is assessed | Evidence of prior skills, learning and experience against the unit requirements | Prior completion of an equivalent training product | | Evidence | Payslips, rosters, position descriptions, dated records, a supervisor who will verify | AQF certification documentation or an authenticated VET transcript |

Where the evidence holds, the unit is signed off rather than repeated. Both Standards require the decision to be documented and made in a way that is fair, transparent, consistent among students and protective of the integrity of the training product.

This page carries no intake dates, deadlines or fees. Those are confirmed directly — through a course enquiry , or by registering an expression of interest for a qualification with limited delivery locations. The full range is on the course list .

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 .

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 .

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.

SIT30722 Certificate III in Hospitality (Restaurant Front of House)

SIT40422 Certificate IV in Hospitality

SIT50422 Diploma of Hospitality Management

SITHFAB021 Provide responsible service of alcohol

SITHFAB025 Prepare and serve espresso coffee

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Victoria)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Australian Capital Territory)

Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2020 (MA000009)

Restaurant Industry Award 2020 (MA000119)

Skills First (Victoria) — VET Funding Contract obligations

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)

Is January a formal intake period?

This page makes no claim about intake dates. The argument here is about readiness, the hiring cycle and three things that reset in January; specific start dates are confirmed on enquiry.

What actually resets in January?

The Skills First per-calendar-year volume caps — two skill sets and two AQF qualifications, with a maximum of two programs at a time.

Do courses I am planning for later in the year count against the cap?

Yes. Programs scheduled to commence later in the same calendar year count towards the limits.

Do I have to be offered a concession, or is that up to the provider?

Providers must offer concessions to eligible students, and the concession fee is capped at no more than 20% of the standard tuition fee. It is a required proportional reduction under the funding contract, not a discretionary discount. A full fee waiver, meaning complete exemption from tuition fees, must be offered to four named groups: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Youth Access Initiative students, students from the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre, and young people on community-based orders.

I am 16 and still enrolled at school. Can I start in January?

You are not barred from enrolling and paying fees, but clause 2.11 makes a student enrolled in any school - government, non-government, independent or Catholic - ineligible for a Skills First subsidy unless they are a school-based apprentice or trainee. Under 17 at commencement you also need an exemption from school attendance, which requires full-time training of at least 25 hours per week excluding travel, term breaks and public holidays, or training combined with employment, and must be signed by the Regional Director or, where Year 10 is complete, by the school principal or Regional Director.

Is there a literacy or numeracy standard I need to meet before enrolling?

Standard 2.2 of the Outcome Standards for RTOs requires the pre-training review to consider a prospective student's language, literacy and numeracy proficiency and digital literacy, along with physical skills, prior experience, prerequisites and entry requirements. Separately, as our own enrolment policy rather than a regulatory rule, we expect LLN skills at around ACSF Level 3 and runs an LLN assessment during application and enrolment, inside its Pre-Training Review. Our minimum age at commencement is 16.

How long does a qualification take?

The AQF sets a volume of learning independently of delivery mode: Certificate II 0.5 to 1 year, Certificate III 1 to 2 years, Certificate IV 0.5 to 2 years, Diploma 1 to 2 years. The volume must be sufficient for a graduate to achieve the learning outcomes.

I started in November as a casual. What classification should I be on now?

If your venue is covered by MA000009 and you were placed at Introductory level, that period runs for up to three months, extendable once by mutual agreement by a further three. A November start means the first period expires around February, after which you move to Level 1 unless further training is mutually agreed.

I worked December shifts at a pub, an RSL and a night club. Same award for all three?

No — three different awards. The pub is MA000009, the registered RSL club is MA000058, and the night club is MA000119. The premises decides, not the job you did.

If I take a permanent job at a different venue type in January, do I lose the value of my Certificate III?

No, in three of the four awards. The Level 4 minimum classification for a relevant Certificate III used at work exists under MA000009 (clause 18.1), MA000119 (clause 18.1) and MA000058 (clause 18.3). Only MA000003, the fast food award, has no equivalent provision. What does not carry across is the level numbering above and below that floor.

What does Level 4 mean in a restaurant or a cafe?

It is a trade grade. MA000119 Schedule A defines Level 4 as "Food and beverage attendant grade 4 (tradesperson)" and "Cook grade 3 (tradesperson)", and the Level 4 rate is that award's standard rate — so a relevant Certificate III used at work reaches a tradesperson grade without an apprenticeship.

Is that floor automatic once I finish?

No. MA000009 and MA000119 require you to make use of the skills and knowledge derived from the Certificate III competencies. MA000058 omits the words "or higher" and adds that the Fair Work Commission may require you to demonstrate that you utilise the relevant skills.

Should I do Certificate III or Certificate IV if I want a better classification?

The pay floor attaches at Certificate III. Certificate IV changes the job — three of its nine core units are human resources units — but the Level 4 minimum is keyed to a relevant Certificate III used at work.

Is Introductory level the same as being a trainee?

No. A trainee under a registered training contract is paid under the National Training Wage, not at Introductory level.

I covered supervisor shifts through December. Was that paid correctly?

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, the time worked only. Food and beverage attendants grades 2 and 3 are excluded.

Can experience gained over the peak count towards a qualification?

It can, where it is documented and can be verified. Recognition of prior learning assesses that evidence against the requirements of specific units — so write down dates, hours and duties in January, while the rosters still exist.

Does study have to stop during busy periods?

Not necessarily. Blended delivery separates knowledge components from practical sessions, and the pre-training review sets a load that fits the learner's roster.

Am I eligible for Skills First?

You must be an Australian citizen, permanent visa holder or New Zealand citizen, training while physically present in Victoria or a listed border postcode, within the volume caps, and if you are 20 or over at the reference date you must not already hold a qualification higher than Certificate I. The provider makes the determination; the Victorian Government's own eligibility indicator is the authoritative reference.

Can I study a subsidised Victorian course online from interstate?

No, as a general rule. The one exception is a temporary interstate or overseas practical placement, capped at 50% of total scheduled hours.

Is training subsidised outside Victoria?

Not through us. Delivery in New South Wales is fee-for-service and unsubsidised.

How many qualifications and skill sets are on your scope?

17 current qualifications, 81 current skill sets and 579 current units, all at extent "Deliver and assess". SIR30216 Certificate III in Retail is one of the 17 but ended on 28 June 2024 and is not available.

Which qualification makes RSA core rather than elective?

SIT30722 Certificate III in Hospitality (Restaurant Front of House). SITHFAB021 and SITXFIN007 are both core there.

What changes at Certificate IV?

Supervision. Three of the nine core units in SIT40422 are human resources units.

Can I study the Diploma outside Victoria?

Not with us. Both Diplomas are Victoria only on our scope — and since the training.gov.au scope register carries no jurisdiction field, that is a question for CHT rather than the national register.