

Plumbing and Fire Sprinklers Award 2020

Clause 13.13 – Training Fees and Textbooks

Clause 13.13 – Training Fees and Textbooks of the *Plumbing and Fire Sprinklers Award 2020* provides:-

13.13 Training Fees and Textbooks

- (a)** Any costs associated with all fees for prescribed courses and prescribed textbooks (excluding those textbooks which are available in the employer’s technical library) incurred by an employee in connection with training specified in, or associated with, the training contract must be reimbursed to the apprentice within 6 months from the commencement of the apprenticeship or the relevant stage of the apprenticeship, or within 3 months of the registered training organisation commencing training, whichever is the later, unless there is unsatisfactory progress;
- (b)** Direct payment of the fees and textbooks, within 6 months from the commencement of the apprenticeship or the relevant stage of the apprenticeship, by an employer to the training provider satisfies the requirement for reimbursement in clause 13.13(a) above.

Comments

As part of the apprenticeship process an apprentice is required to be enrolled with, and attend, a Registered Training Organisation (**RTO**).

As part of that enrolment process the Apprentice is charged a fee by the RTO.

Clause 13.13 of the PFS Award requires the employer to either pay the fees directly to the RTO or, on the condition that the Apprentice is satisfactorily progressing through the academic part of their apprenticeship, reimburse the Apprentice the fees previously paid by the Apprentice. The payment of the fees would include not just the fees, but also the textbooks required by the RTO (unless the textbooks are available through the employer).

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Clause 13.13(a) of the PFS Award requires that the reimbursement must be made within six (6) months of the “commencement of the apprenticeship or the relevant stage of the apprenticeship, or within 3 months of the registered training organisation commencing training, whichever is the later.”

This means that:-

- for a 1st Year Apprentice, the employer should, at the latest, reimburse the Apprentice within the first six (6) of their apprenticeship; and / or
- for a 2nd Year Apprentice, the employer should, at the latest, reimburse the Apprentice within the first six (6) of them becoming a 2nd Year Apprentice; and / or
- for a 3rd Year Apprentice, the employer should, at the latest, reimburse the Apprentice within the first six (6) of them becoming a 3rd Year Apprentice; and / or
- (if applicable) for a 4th Year Apprentice, the employer should, at the latest, reimburse the Apprentice within the first six (6) of them becoming a 4th Year Apprentice; and / or

This means that an employer cannot withhold the reimbursement of the Apprentices RTO fees until they have satisfactorily completed their apprenticeship.

When the employer is reimbursing the Apprentice the fees, the employer should require the Apprentice to provide a copy of the receipt for the fees / textbooks to be paid or to be reimbursed. The employer should (if possible, given the time constraints) also require the Apprentice to provide a statement that confirms satisfactory progress.

For further information about this clause, or other clauses of the PFS Award (or NES) please contact Master Plumbers.

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