# Skills Overview and Apprenticeship Completion:

Apprenticeships in the furnishing industry combine hands-on experience in the workplace with structured training through a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). To complete their qualification, apprentices must show that they can perform all required tasks safely, consistently, and to industry standards. The workplace competence is assessed over time in accordance with the appropriate Unit of Competency and Qualification.

## How an Apprentice Achieves Competency:

In a competency-based apprenticeship system, achieving competence is the core requirement for completing a qualification. Competence is defined as the consistent application of knowledge, skills, and attitude to perform a task to the required industry standards.

### 1. Follow the Training Plan

The apprentice’s journey to competence is guided by the Training Plan, developed by the **Registered Training Organisation (RTO)** in consultation with the employer and apprentice. It ensures that training delivered in the workplace aligns with the qualification requirements.

The Training Plan lists the specific **Units of Competency** the apprentice must complete. Employers should provide opportunities for apprentices to practise these skills on the job and maintain regular communication with the RTO to monitor progress and support successful completion.

### 2. Combine On-the-Job and Formal Training

Competence is built through a combination of two essential training components

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| **Training Component** | **Description** | **Role in Competence** |
| On-the-Job Training (Workplace) | Practical, hands-on experience under the supervision of a qualified mentor or supervisor at the workplace. | Application of Skills:  This is where apprentices practice the skills and knowledge they learn in theory, becoming consistently proficient in performing tasks to industry standards. |
| Formal Training (Off-the-Job) | Structured study, classes or workplace visits delivered by the RTO | Acquisition of Knowledge:  Provides the technical knowledge, theory, and foundational skills - the 'why' - that underpins workplace performance. |

### 3. Complete Assessment and Demonstrate Skill

As apprentices progress, their competence is measured and formally recorded:

**RTO Assessment:**   
The RTO assesses skills and knowledge through assessments, practical tasks, and workplace evidence.

**Employer Confirmation:**  
Employers confirm that apprentices can successfully and consistently demonstrate required skills in the workplace.

**Maintain Records:**   
Apprentices maintain a logbook or evidence record, signed off by supervisors to confirm progress.

### 4. Develop Employability and Soft Skills

Beyond technical ability, competence also includes professional attributes and soft skills such as:

* Communication – understanding instructions, asking questions, and explaining work
* Initiative – taking responsibility and seeking learning opportunities.
* Problem-Solving – analysing issues and finding safe, effective solutions.
* Professionalism & Teamwork – being punctual, respecting workplace policies, and collaborating effectively.

### 5. Final Completion

* An apprenticeship is complete, and the apprentice becomes a qualified tradesperson - when:
  + The RTO has assessed competence in all units for the applicable qualification.
  + The employer confirms that the apprentice consistently demonstrates the required skills in the workplace.
  + The RTO issues the qualifications.

### Competency-Based Completion

In the Australian vocational education and training (VET) system, apprenticeships are not based on time completion - they are based on competency achieved. This approach is called Competency-Based Training. It focuses on what a person can do in the workplace rather than how long they’ve been doing it.

Competency-Based Completion means an apprentice can complete their training and become a qualified tradesperson as soon as they have:

1. **Qualification Complete:** The Registered Training Organisation (RTO) has assessed and confirmed competence in all the required units for the qualification.
2. **Workplace Competence:** The employer confirms that the apprentice can consistently apply those required skills, knowledge, and industry standards in the actual workplace.

The key benefit of this approach is it’s flexibility. Apprentices who demonstrate competence early may complete their training ahead of the nominal term, while those who require additional time have the opportunity to continue developing their skills until they meet all competency requirements.

### Apprenticeship Completions by State and Territory

Once the RTO issues the qualification, the finalisation of the apprenticeship and the issuing of the Completion Certificate is handled according to the specific process of each state or territory department.

**For further information on the completion process by state – Please refer to Quick Reference Guide: Australian Apprenticeship Completion Process - link**

**Extending an Apprenticeship Training Contract**

Sometimes an apprentice may need extra time to complete their training - for example, due to illness, workplace changes, skill development needs, or personal circumstances.

In some cases, the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) may identify that the apprentice is falling behind in their training and is at risk of non-completion. In these situations, the RTO will discuss progress with the employer and recommend applying for an extension.

When this occurs, the employer can apply to extend the apprenticeship term through their State Training Authority (STA) or Apprenticeship Connect Australia Provider (ACAP).

The extension process usually involves:

* Discussing the situation with your RTO to confirm the apprentice’s progress and remaining training requirements.
* Completing an extension request form with your ACAP provider or state training authority.
* Having all parties (employer, apprentice, and RTO) agree to the new end date.

Extensions can help ensure the apprentice completes all training and assessment requirements rather than ending the contract early. For more information, contact your ACAP provider or visit your state training authority’s apprenticeship website.

**For further information on the completion process by state – Please refer to Quick Reference Guide:**

## Key Message

Apprenticeship completion recognises skill, safety, and consistency. With employer support, clear communication, and opportunities to practice, apprentices are more likely to achieve competency and continue in the trade.