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A trusted blueprint for a skilled workforce



MASSACHUSETTS
Registered Apprenticeship



Apprentice Handbook



June 2025

About this Handbook

The purpose of the *Apprentice Handbook* is to inform you of your rights and responsibilities as an apprentice. You are encouraged to read this handbook thoroughly and use it for future reference if you have questions during your apprenticeship.

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The creation of this document has been 100% funded by a portion of United States Department of Labor awards totaling \$1.9 million. Additional information can be furnished upon request.

Please visit mass.gov/das.

Welcome

You are officially recognized as a Registered Apprentice in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and have started what may be one of the most rewarding opportunities of your life. During your Apprenticeship program, you will receive some of the finest training and education available.

Once you are registered as an Apprentice, you have certain rights under the [Commonwealth's Apprenticeship Standards](#). However, with those rights come responsibilities. For you to benefit fully from your Apprenticeship, you must take ownership of your training.

You should periodically review your program standards with your program Sponsor, including the on-the-job training hours and related technical instruction hours, to ensure you are receiving the agreed-upon, hands-on training, classroom instruction, and wages as set forth in your *Apprentice Agreement*.



History of Apprenticeship

- ◆ Apprenticeships in Massachusetts have a long history that dates back to the 1600s. The tradition combines classroom instruction with on-the-job training.
- ◆ The oldest *Apprentice Agreement* in the United States was signed in Boston in 1771.
- ◆ Many famous Americans, including Benjamin Franklin and Paul Revere, started their careers as Apprentices in Boston.
- ◆ Apprenticeships were primarily for specialized trades like Blacksmith and Silversmith.
- ◆ Apprenticeships are now thriving in a range of industries, including construction, technology, healthcare, energy, and advanced manufacturing.

About DAS

The Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS) within the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) is responsible for the oversight of Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the Commonwealth.



MISSION

Our mission is to promote, develop, and support Registered Apprenticeship Programs. We help create rewarding career pathways for job seekers and empower employers to build a diverse workforce.

VISION

Our vision is that innovative, high-quality Registered Apprenticeship Programs help develop diverse talent and drive a more affordable, competitive, and equitable economy in Massachusetts.

VALUES

- **Innovation** – Creating dynamic and impactful Registered Apprenticeship Programs that adapt to meet the evolving needs of industries.
- **Inclusion** – Building diverse and meaningful Registered Apprenticeship Programs that tap into the talents of underrepresented populations.
- **Collaboration** – Establishing strong partnerships with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors and Intermediaries to develop best practices and leverage our collective expertise.
- **Customer Service** – Delivering responsive support and guidance to all our stakeholders to ensure their success throughout the Registered Apprenticeship journey.

Responsibility Overview

The Massachusetts Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS) is responsible for the development, implementation, and monitoring of Apprenticeship programs and their standards in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The DAS Quality Assurance Team is assigned to a specific geographic workload in the state for purposes of program implementation, oversight, and administration. Quality Assurance Specialists are the point of contact when you have questions about or concerns with your Apprenticeship training or State policies, or if your Sponsor is unable to provide a proper response.

Although DAS has responsibility for oversight of the Apprenticeship program, both you, the Apprentice, and your Sponsor have responsibilities as well. Your Sponsor hires and pays you, provides mentored training, ensures related technical instruction (RTI) is completed, and administers your Apprenticeship program.

Apprentice Responsibilities

- **Work safely.**
- **Avoid absenteeism and tardiness** at work and at school.
- **Attend and actively participate in RTI** while striving to achieve the highest grades possible.
- **Keep track of your training hours** (either in the form of work records or logbook) and advise your Mentor of any deficiencies in your Apprenticeship training.
- **Comply with the provisions** of the *Apprentice Agreement*.
- **Follow your Sponsor's written work rules** and policies.
- **Ensure you are provided with proper supervision** by your Journeyperson/Mentor.



i *If you need extra support, reach out to your human resources specialist or your grievance contact, who is included in your Apprenticeship Standards.*

Sponsor Responsibilities

- **Create a safe workplace** and learning environment.
- **Provide supervision and training** by a Journeyperson/Mentor on the job site at all times.
- **Ensure proper Apprentice-to-Journeyperson/Mentor ratios** at all times.
- **Monitor and furnish the Apprentices well-rounded on-the-job training** via the *Work Process Schedule* and provide feedback on performance.
- **Comply with the provisions** of the *Apprenticeship Program Standards*, *DAS Apprentice Standards*, *Apprentice Agreement*, and licensing requirements (as applicable).



All workers have a right to a safe work environment. Employers cannot retaliate against workers for exercising their rights to a safe and healthy workplace under the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Division of Apprentice Standards Responsibilities

- **Develop, register, and monitor programs** to ensure conformity with State statutes, regulations, standards, and policies.
- **Respond** to Apprentice and employer questions and concerns.
- **Deliver quality assurance and support** (i.e., complaints, work changes, and problem solving).
- **Confer with the providers of RTI** to assure quality classroom training.
- **Monitor** Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies and Affirmative Action compliance.
- **Register, renew, cancel, and review** Apprentice and program information.



Program Requirements



Apprentice Registration Agreement

The *Apprentice Registration Agreement* is a legal, binding document between you, your Sponsor, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The terms and conditions of your training are contained in the *Agreement* including the start date of the Apprenticeship. Pay raises are determined by the start date along with the accumulation of work hours.

Your Sponsor will provide the information to the Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS) that is needed to create the *Apprentice Agreement*, and you will need to sign the *Agreement*. Please take time to review your copy of the *Apprentice Agreement* for thorough understanding. This is your record of registration and lists important information such as your wage progression, occupation registration category, and any credit for previous training or instruction.



You're Apprenticeship is valid only for the number of years/hours listed in the Apprentice Agreement. Failure to complete the required on-the-job training (OJT) hours and related technical instruction (RTI) in this time frame could result in your termination or cancellation from the program. Please note that two 6-month extensions can be requested for good cause.

You should review and understand all information contained in your *Apprentice Agreement*. The following are a few examples of the sections contained therein:

- **Term of Apprenticeship in hours:** Describes the length of the Apprenticeship program stated in hours only.
- **Credit for previous OJT and RTI hours:** Indicates potential credit for previous OJT and RTI hours.
- **Graduated scale of wages in percentages to be paid to the Apprentice:** Provides information on the graduated scale of wages in percentages that will be paid to the Apprentice according to hours worked. Percentages are based on the Journeyperson/Mentor wage. Must meet or exceed the Massachusetts minimum wage.



On prevailing wage construction projects, the rate of pay must comply with the wage rate or percentages stated on the wage schedules issued by the Department of Labor Standards. The Apprentice's step is based on the hours worked.

Apprentice ID Cards and Licenses

Once the *Apprentice Agreement* is received and processed, your Sponsor will obtain your *Apprentice Identification (ID) card* from DAS and provide it to you.

As an Apprentice, you will need to be aware of what the requirements are related to licenses and *Apprentice ID cards*. **The ID card must always be in your possession while working, and you should ensure the ID card is updated annually and not expired.**

In some Apprenticeship programs, the Apprentice must simultaneously hold an active *Apprentice License* and an active *Apprentice ID card*.

- ***Apprentice ID cards*** are issued by DAS.
- ***Apprentice Licenses*** are issued by some licensing boards for the occupation your Apprenticeship is preparing you for. **You will need to check with your Sponsor and/or the licensing board if this is required.**



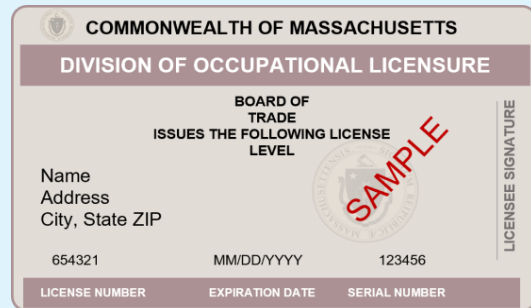
*If you have any questions about the *Apprentice Agreement* or *Apprentice ID card*, please talk to your Sponsor or reach out to apprenticeship@mass.gov.*



Example of Apprentice ID



Example of Apprentice License



***Your Apprentice ID card and Apprentice License (if required) must have an active date at all times throughout the term of your apprenticeship.**

Licensing Questions

In Massachusetts, each licensed occupation is regulated by the respective licensing board for that occupation. Each licensing board has varying license carrying requirements. Above is one example of a license that is issued by a licensing board. Again, check with your program Sponsor or respective licensing board if an *Apprentice License* is required.



If you are not sure if you are required to carry a license, seek guidance from your program Sponsor or find more information on the official [licensing website](#).

Probationary Period

A Probationary Period is required in each Apprenticeship.

The Probationary Period is no greater than 25% of the term of the Apprenticeship, or a maximum of 1 year, whichever is less. It provides an opportunity for both the Sponsor and the Apprentice to adjust to the program standards.



Should either you or your sponsor wish to cancel the Apprentice Agreement during the Probationary Period, either party can do so by notifying DAS in writing of this decision.

RTI and Importance of School Attendance

Apprenticeship training provides an overall strategy to train a skilled worker. This strategy combines supervised, structured OJT and RTI.

RTI is an integral part of every Apprenticeship and is required by Massachusetts Apprenticeship regulations. Every Sponsor has the responsibility to arrange for the Apprentice to attend RTI. However, it is not mandatory for your Sponsor to pay for your books or tuition expenses.

The importance of RTI is twofold:

- First, it helps ensure uniformity of instruction within each industry.
- Second, RTI gives you, as an individual Apprentice, the theoretical knowledge you need to excel in your occupation. This is what adds value to you as an individual, to your career, and to your industry.

RTI is the academic portion of the Apprenticeship. If you are working in a licensed trade or occupation, you must ensure that your schooling is approved by the respective licensing entity. RTI may be provided by:

- A merit shop association school.
- A union joint Apprenticeship training center (JATC) school.
- An approved proprietary school.
- An approved correspondence facility or online training provider.
- Approved community colleges.



Excessive absenteeism or tardiness from school may lead to termination or cancellation of your Apprenticeship. *It is your responsibility to follow your school's attendance notification procedure.*

Work Records

You and your Sponsor should maintain an accurate record of your progress and have ongoing scheduled Apprenticeship meetings.

Since the training and schooling extend over several years, recordkeeping is required to ensure that all parts of the Apprenticeship program have been covered. Your official work records should be reviewed regularly by you and your employer.



Layoffs and Cancellations

If a reduction in the workforce becomes necessary, suspension and reinstatement of Apprentices will be conducted to retain the most advanced Apprentice(s).

The Sponsor must update any change in Apprentice status in the DAS system (i.e., layoffs, cancellations, deployments, and leaves of absence).

Discipline

You may be subject to disciplinary procedures if failing to make satisfactory progress or failing to fulfill your responsibilities in the Apprenticeship program. Your Sponsor should provide details regarding what is expected to successfully complete the Apprenticeship and what actions or inactions may lead to discipline.



Completion Procedures

The *Apprentice Agreement* specifies the length of time that is required to graduate within your occupation. If you meet the requirements, you will receive an *Apprentice Completion Certificate* (industry-recognized credential). The completion of an *Apprentice Agreement* is based on satisfactory performance and accomplishment of these required objectives:

- **Completion of the term:** The term is the extent of the period of Apprenticeship in hours. A *Completion Certificate* request needs to be processed in the DAS system indicating the term and work processes that have been completed and the date they were completed.
- **Completion of RTI:** The required hours of RTI by approved school course outline for your occupation from an instructional program must be submitted into the DAS system. A letter and/or documentation of course completion and passing exams must be submitted to DAS by the Sponsor with the completion request.



Once DAS receives notification from your Sponsor that all program requirements have been completed (along with prescribed certifications, diplomas, or approved school summaries), DAS will then issue an Apprentice Completion Certificate.

Harassment-Free Workplace

Harassment

You have the right to a harassment-free workplace and school setting.

Everyone's awareness and contributions help to eliminate harassment and to support respect. You can do the following to ensure you, and your Co-Apprentices, receive the respect you deserve:

- **Complete your required workplace anti-harassment training, ask questions, and discuss what you have learned in your training group.**
- **Consider all Apprentices your equal**, both personally and professionally.
- **Respect other Apprentices' opinions and beliefs** about work, study, and personal goals.
- **Acknowledge that each Apprentice comes from a different background** socially, economically, and ethnically, and each brings new knowledge to your classroom, worksite, and the industry.
- **Understand that it is difficult** for most people to tell another person that certain behavior and/or activities offend them.
- **Act on your instincts**; if you feel you are taking a chance of offending someone with your words or actions, you probably are.
- **Offer support to your classmates and co-workers** if they are being harassed.
- **Discuss any harassment you witness or experience** with the designated Grievance Officer.



The term "harassment" includes slurs, jokes, and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, gender, religion, national origin, citizenship, age, handicap or disability, marital status, or sexual orientation. Harassment also includes sexual advances; request for sexual favors; unwelcome or offensive touching; or other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct of a sexual or gender-based nature.



Harassment, whether committed by students, co-workers, supervisors, or instructors, needs to be addressed immediately. If harassment does occur in your classroom or at the jobsite, you have the right to seek assistance confidentially and without penalty or retribution. Policies will be in place in your employer's human resources office or can be obtained from your grievance contact, who is included in your *Apprenticeship Standards*.

If you are unsure or uncomfortable about following the stated procedures, discuss the issue with your sponsor, union representative (if applicable), or Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS) Quality Assurance Specialist.

While procedures used to address harassing behaviors might vary, the common goal for partners in Apprenticeship training is the same — to provide a supportive and respectful learning and working environment for Apprentices.

Discrimination

Sponsors, employers, Unions, and educational institutions may not discriminate based upon an individual's protected class. Discrimination can take place during or prior to employment. It stems from training or interacting with an individual based on stereotypes and without consideration of the individual's ability, skill, experience, or motivation.

Supervisors and instructors are charged with providing equal training to all Apprentices. It is important that you discuss situations that you think might be discriminatory with a supervisor. These discussions should be held or kept confidential, and they should not result in retaliation. You can also discuss a discrimination concern with your DAS Quality Assurance Specialist or other members of DAS.

i *Protected classes in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts include race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity/expression, and sexual orientation), criminal record, sexual orientation, veteran status, genetic information, being an individual with a disability, or being a person of 40 years or older.*

Complaint Procedure

A complaint may be a request for assistance to solve a problem/alleged problem regarding any part of the Apprenticeship program. If you have a concern/complaint related to your Apprenticeship training, discuss it with your sponsor.

After discussing with your sponsor, you may submit your complaint by:

- **Mail:** Mail your complaint in writing to: Division of Apprentice Standards, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 501, Boston, MA 02114.
- **Email:** Send a message to apprenticeship@mass.gov.
- **In person:** Bring your written complaint to our office at 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 501, Boston, MA 02114.
- **Phone:** Submit your complaint over the phone by calling (617) 626-5409.

DAS personnel will then investigate and attempt to seek a resolution. DAS normally has 90 days to issue a decision.

i *Other resources are available related to submitting complaints. Apprentices may contact apprenticeship@mass.gov for additional information.*

Military Active Duty



If you are called to Active Duty during your apprenticeship, your sponsor must comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Your *Apprentice Agreement* should be put on hold, and your sponsor should submit a request for “Military Leave” in the Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS) system. If your sponsor has questions, they can reach out to apprenticeship@mass.gov.

When you return from Active Duty, promptly inform your sponsor that you wish to return to your Apprenticeship. By law, your sponsor is obligated to employ you when you return if work is available and if you appeal to your sponsor within the required period. If you need to take military leave, you should familiarize yourself with the timing requirements for USERRA job protection.

i Veterans' Benefits

Some military veterans enter Massachusetts Apprenticeship programs after their discharge from the military or while serving as an Active Military Reservist. If you are a Military Veteran who is eligible to collect Veterans' educational benefits (GI Bill), you may do so while serving in your Apprenticeship.

DAS assists in completion of the Apprentice Agreement, which is needed to apply for your Veterans' Apprenticeship benefits. Additional information can be obtained from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

Key Reminders for Apprentices

- ✓ **Carefully read** and fully understand this *Apprentice Handbook*.
- ✓ **Understand** your rights and responsibilities fully, as outlined in the:
 - *Apprentice Agreement*.
 - *Sponsor program standards*.
 - [Division of Apprentice Standards Regulations](#).
 - *Work Process Schedule* (on-the-job training [OJT]).
 - Related technical instruction (RTI).
 - Wage steps and progression.
- ✓ **Remember** that there should be a written evaluation provided by the program sponsor at every wage step/progression.
- ✓ **Speak to your sponsor** if you experience any issues regarding your wage step and your OJT and RTI credit.
- ✓ **Be aware** that you can only be enrolled in one Apprenticeship program at a time.
- ✓ **Ask questions and share feedback** with your Mentor and supervisor throughout your Apprenticeship, and schedule meeting times to discuss your progress.
- ✓ **If your Apprentice Identification card expires or is lost or you have any licensing questions**, contact your sponsor for resolution, or reach out to apprenticeship@mass.gov.
- ✓ **If you require a duplicate Completion Certificate**, ask your sponsor to request a replacement.



Information on Wage Progression Steps

The Journey-Level Wage (JLW) is the wage you will earn upon completion of the program.

- *The number of steps and percentages in your JLW progression will be determined by the length of your program and your employer's wage scale — this will determine the pay increases you receive throughout your Apprenticeship.*
- *At least one step per 2,000 hours is required, and your starting wage must be at least Massachusetts' minimum wage of \$15.00 per hour.*

Helpful Links



Massachusetts Division of Apprenticeship Standards

The Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) is a State Apprenticeship Agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor. DAS is responsible for supporting, promoting, developing, and serving Massachusetts Registered Apprenticeship Programs on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. DAS helps create rewarding career pathways for job seekers and empowers employers to build a diverse and skilled workforce through Registered Apprenticeship.



454 Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 26.00: Apprentices Standards

The *Apprentice Standards* are a set of criteria under which the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's DAS may continue to be recognized as an appropriate agency for registering local apprentice programs for federal purposes pursuant to the Fitzgerald Act, 29 U.S.C. 50, and the federal regulations promulgated thereunder, 29 CFR 29.1 through 29.14.



Massachusetts Division of Occupational Licensure

The Division of Occupational Licensure (DOL) is responsible for oversight of 26 boards of registration, as well as the Office of Public Safety and Inspections and the Office of Private Occupational School Education. Collectively, DOL boards and offices license and regulate more than 500,000 individuals, businesses, and schools to engage in over 100 trades and professions in Massachusetts.

On [this site](#), you can verify the status of a license issued by Licensing Boards or the DOL Office of Public Safety and Inspections. You can also download a data file of your search results at no cost.

Some of the Licensing Boards include:

- [Board of Examiners of Sheet Metal Workers](#)
- [Board of Elevator Regulations](#)
- [Board of State Examiners of Electricians](#)
- [Board of State Examiners of Plumbers and Gas Fitters](#)
- [Bureau of Pipefitters, Refrigeration Technicians, and Sprinkler Fitters](#)



Massachusetts Board of Registration of Dispensing Opticians

Dispensing opticians fit and dispense prescription ophthalmic eyewear including eyeglasses and contact lenses. Members of this profession measure and duplicate existing ophthalmic prescriptions and fabricate eyeglasses.

The Board of Registration of Dispensing Opticians protects the public through regulation of the practice by testing candidates and licensing those who are qualified, ensuring compliance with state statutes and the board's rules and regulations, conducting hearings, and facilitating resolutions to consumer complaints.



Massachusetts Department of Public Health

The Department of Public Health (DPH) promotes and protects health and wellness and prevents injury and illness for all people. DPH prioritizes racial equity in health by improving equitable access to quality public health and healthcare services and partnering with communities most impacted by health inequities and structural racism.

DPH's [Bureau of Substance Addiction Services](#) oversees the statewide system of prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery support services for individuals, families, and communities affected by substance addiction.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs helps guide individuals as they transition from Active-Duty Service or from service in the Guard or Reserve.



U.S. Department of Labor, Apprenticeship USA

[Apprenticeship.gov](#) is the U.S. Department of Labor's one-stop source to connect career seekers, employers, and education partners with apprenticeship resources.

[The Registered Apprenticeship Academy](#) is a learning hub that provides on-demand training and offers training and resources for active registered apprentices once they have entered a program.



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mass.gov/apprenticeship

apprenticeship@mass.gov

(617) 626-5409