

Trade Test background

Although it can be expected that an increasing number of workers will enter the trades training through the apprenticeship scheme, the majority of skilled workers in Samoa are, and will continue to be for some time, persons who have not had this opportunity.

Therefore a Trade Testing scheme has been set up for the purpose of carrying out trade tests. The scheme is administered by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour in conjunction with the Apprenticeship Council.

The main purpose of the Trade Testing Scheme is to provide the means whereby those persons who achieved their present status by experience on-the-job only may obtain formal recognition of their skills. This does not only provide skill standards allied to local trade practices but also a workforce, in certain trade areas, with a known degree of skill by whom apprentices can be trained on-the-job.

Workers who successfully pass a trade test will acquire an authoritative certificate of proficiency in their trade at varying levels of skill which will give them a recognized status, not only in the industry in which they are employed but also, in the case of workers employed by Government Ministries, by the Public Service Commission.

Trades

Trade Testing is available in the following trades:

- Construction and Joinery Furniture
- Plumbing and Sheet Metal
- Automotive Engineering
- Welding and Fabrication
- Fitting and Machining
- Electrical

Grades of Tests

The two grades of trade test, in order of standard are:

- Tradesman Grade 1
- Tradesman Grade 2

The standard in the Tradesman Grade 1 test will be equivalent to the satisfactory completion of an apprenticeship training on the third year approved by the Apprenticeship Council.

Eligibility

To be eligible to take a trade test candidates must have at least five (5) years experience, and;

- a) In the case of an applicant for a tradesman grade 2 test, must have completed at least five years employment in the trade in which he seeks to take a test;
- b) In the case of an applicant for a tradesman grade 1 test, must have completed at least seven years employment in the trade and have obtained a trade test certificate at Tradesman Grade 2 standard in the trade in which he seeks to take a test;
- c) Notwithstanding the provisions set out in paragraph 4(b), initially, and for a limited period only, applicants who successfully pass grade 2 trade test will be allowed to enter for grade 1 test within six months of the issue of their Grade Certification;
- d) After the initial series of tests, mentioned in paragraph 4(c), no further application for a trade test shall be accepted from an applicant who during the year immediately preceding the date of the application has undergone a trade test and has failed to reach the required standard.

Nature of Test

Each test will last for a full working day and will consist of a practical test and oral questions. The emphasis will be on the practical part of the test. Oral questions in either English or Samoan, according to the preference of the candidate, will be designed to test the theoretical knowledge of the applicant. The practical test in each case will be the completion of a set task, or tasks, within a fixed time.

Applications

Applications must be made on the appropriate form obtainable from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour, Apia. Candidates are required to enclose with completed application forms a letter from their employer stating the length of their previous employment in the trade. In the case of a self-employed person, written proof of previous experience must be provided from a reliable independent source.

Fees

A fee of \$50 Tala is charged for trade tests.

Arrangement for Tests

A candidate will be given at least 14 days notice of the date when his/her test will be held; tests will be conducted in the relevant workshop of the National University of Samoa Institute of Technology (NUSIOT) and will be supervised and graded by the Trade Testing committee appointed for that trade.

Issue of Trade Test Certificates

Candidates will be advised in writing by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour, of the results of their tests and successful applicants will be issued with a Trade Test Certificate on production of two passport size photographs of themselves.

Trade Testing Panels

Each Trade Testing Panels comprises three members who are nominated by the Apprenticeship Council. Panel members serve a three year term which is renewable.

Apprentices

Persons who have satisfactorily completed an apprenticeship approved by the Apprenticeship council may, if they wish, obtain a Trade Test Certificate at Tradesman Grade 1 standard on application to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour. Any such application must be accompanied by the applicant's Certificate of Apprenticeship. No fee is required and such applicants will not be required to undertake a Trade Test.