

# FAQ

# YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

## Q: What does the Masterlink recruitment process involve?

**A:** All applicants go through our robust recruitment process before being accepted as a Masterlink apprentice candidate. They have passed:

- Phone and face-to-face interviews
- Testing for numeracy, literacy and mechanical reasoning
- Reference checks
- Criminal background check
- Pre-employment medical, including drug and alcohol testing.

Our candidates have the right stuff to succeed in our trade—a good attitude is essential and a clean NZ driver licence is ideal.

## Q: How do I find out about apprentice candidates?

**A:** If your Regional Manager knows what you are specifically looking for in an apprentice, they may contact you directly to recommend a candidate who fits the bill. We also regularly email candidate profiles out to companies in each region. To receive these, email [admin@masterlink.co.nz](mailto:admin@masterlink.co.nz) or ask your Regional Manager.



## Q: What is a host?

**A:** Masterlink employs apprentices directly and places them with businesses who 'host' them for their on-job training. As their employer, Masterlink handles all apprentice administration including paying their wages, ACC and KiwiSaver, managing their training and handling any HR issues.

We aim to keep the apprentice with the same host for the duration of the apprenticeship, but if things change, we work with all parties to achieve the best outcome. Masterlink hosts (and apprentices) benefit from the support and flexibility we provide.

## Q: How much does it cost to go through Masterlink?

**A:** There is no upfront fee for the host. Masterlink charges a weekly fee for the actual hours the apprentice works for you (approx. 42 weeks a year). This rate varies, depending on how much you choose to pay your apprentice. We pay the apprentice when they're on their off-job block course training, annual leave, stat holidays or sick leave—all at no charge to you.

## Q: How do I get value from a first-year apprentice?

**A:** Your apprentice can be an asset from day one. In the first year, apprentices are required to be directly supervised for restricted work, but there are plenty of other jobs they can do on their own by keeping in touch by mobile and sending photos of their work (for example, sizing holes in preparation for a pipe out, or digging a trench). If your apprentice is carrying out the work of a tradesman, they should be charged out as such. Your Regional Manager can discuss this with you to ensure you're making a profit from your apprentice.

## Q: Do I have to take a candidate sourced by Masterlink?

**A:** No—you can put forward a candidate of your own. We will put them through our recruitment process and if this highlights any shortcomings, we can work with you to support them as they find their feet.

**Q: How long does a plumbing, drainlaying and gasfitting apprenticeship take?**

**A:** It takes around 5 years to attain a New Zealand Certificate (Level 4) in Plumbing, Drainlaying and Gasfitting (PDG). This involves 9,000 hours of practical work experience either on-job (on the tools) at your workplace and off-job one-week block courses at a training provider. Block courses are spread over the apprenticeship with a total of approx. 18 weeks for a PDG apprenticeship.

Other available qualification options are Plumbing & Drainlaying (4 years—around 8,000 hours of practical work experience) and Drainlaying only (2 years—around 4,000 hours of practical work experience).

Masterlink apprentices generally complete their qualifications well within these timeframes.



**Q: What about the Plumbers, Gasfitters & Drainlayers Board (PGDB)'s Tradesman registration exams?**

**A:** As the apprentice nears completion of their qualification, they need to sit and pass the relevant Tradesman Plumber, Gasfitter and/or Drainlayer registration exams, set by the PGDB, before being able to apply to the PGDB for registration and a practising licence. These exams are now embedded in the New Zealand Certificate and take place towards the end of the final year of the qualification.

**Q: Is my apprentice eligible for fees-free training?**

**A:** The Targeted Trades and Apprenticeship Fund (TTAF) means there are no course training fees for apprentices for 2.5 years from 1 July 2020. This applies to both new and existing Masterlink apprentices. When training fees do apply, Masterlink makes a weekly deduction from the apprentice's wages.

**Q: Am I eligible for funding and employer support?**

**A:** Masterlink is always up to date with the latest initiatives to support you to take on an apprentice. For example, we apply for the government's Apprenticeship Boost funding and pass it on to our hosts. We can also keep you up to date with changing wage rates and explain the impact legislation (such as The Privacy Act) could have on your business.

**Q: What if my workload dries up?**

**A:** By taking on an apprentice, you are committing to keeping them in your business for the duration of their apprenticeship. But we understand that even the best-laid plans can change. If you were to face significant, long-term workload challenges, Masterlink could look to transfer your apprentice to another business—either temporarily or permanently. Sometimes businesses share an apprentice so that they get the required hours and variety of work necessary to qualify. Contact your Regional Manager for help.

**Q: What if my apprentice is offered a job by another company?**

**A:** Our apprentices are bonded to Masterlink for the duration of their apprenticeship and not expected to move to another company without mutual agreement.



**More questions?**

**Just email [admin@masterlink.co.nz](mailto:admin@masterlink.co.nz) or call 0800 502 102.**