

# Myriad choices for hands-on training

**S**electing a career is only half the battle these days. Once a decision has been made, choosing where to study can be a headache. The choice for university students is simple with only 16 universities in NSW. For those looking for a trade or vocational course the options available can be overwhelming. There are 967 TAFE colleges and private registered training organisations (RTOs) in NSW. Another 815 RTOs deliver courses in NSW and are registered in other states. That is 1782 training options to choose from.

To make finding the best courses easier the Institute for Trade Skills Excellence has introduced a star rating scheme.

Since October last year more than 90 training providers have been rated by the scheme and another 50 are being reviewed.

Courses are awarded one, two, or three stars depending what criteria they meet. This week 15 new courses were rated under the scheme. Institute CEO Brian Wexham says it will help students and parents assess the course that is best for them.

"It is essential that students at RTOs go to courses that give them the skills that industry is looking for," Wexham says.

"They can go there confident they are going to a competent course."

Because the scheme was developed with industry, the courses assessed and rated by the program gain links to employer bodies.

The ratings are independent, he says.

"The important thing is to keep raising the bar for the training taking place," he says.

The NSW Department of Education and Training recognises training organisations at its annual Training Awards.

DET state training services general manager David Collins says it pays to do your homework and potential students should be asking questions before they commit.

"The sort of questions people should be asking are: Where will the qualifications lead? Are students getting jobs out of the course? And what are the costs of the course?" Collins says.

With 35 per cent of school leavers completing a vocational course, students should be checking whether they will get recognition for prior learning (RPL), he says.

"If you are going into a similar course you want to make sure you're getting recognition for the work you've done," he says.

Friends and career counsellors can also offer invaluable advice on which courses are better than others.

"If you know someone who has done a course with a provider then that is often the best way to find out what it is like," he says.

Apprentice carpenter Jim Leathbridge says his decision to study at TAFE's Nirimba College, which was this week awarded three stars for its carpentry course, was influenced by a number of factors.

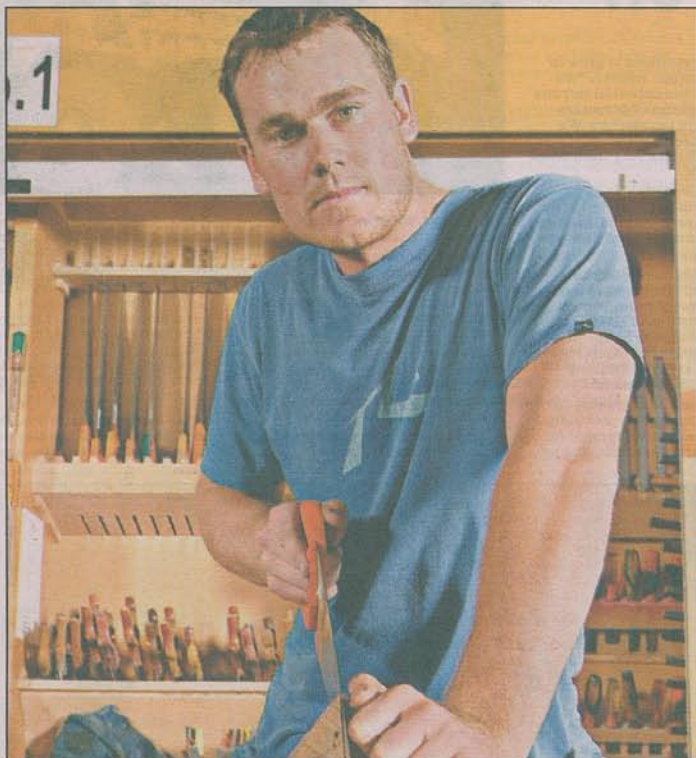
Leathbridge says he studied at the college to earn his construction site green card.

"I was impressed by the set-up," Leathbridge says. "They had a good name for carpentry and engineering as well."

The college is close to home and work, which is an added benefit, he says. And his employer was keen for him to study there.

"He's had people go through the college so he knew what the standard was like."

HENRY BUDD



Trusted... Jim Leathbridge says Nirimba TAFE has a good reputation. Picture: JOHN FOTIADIS

## Trust your future to the stars — of TAFE that is

The Institute of Trade Skills has awarded the following TAFE NSW courses a star rating.

- South Western Sydney Institute, Padstow: Auto — three gold stars
- South Western Sydney Institute, Wetherill Park: Heavy Auto — three gold stars
- Western Sydney Institute, Nirimba College: Bricklaying, Blocklaying, Roof Tiling, Carpentry — three gold stars
- Sydney Institute, Randwick College: Wall and Floor Tiling, Waterproofing — three gold stars
- Western Sydney Institute, Nepean College: Bakery — two gold stars
- North Coast Institute, Wollonbar and Kingscliffe: Hairdressing — two gold stars
- North Coast Institute, Coffs Harbour: Commercial Cookery — one gold star

- Illawarra Institute, Wollongong West: Hairdressing — one gold star
- Illawarra Institute, Wollongong: Bakery — one gold star
- Illawarra Institute, Wollongong: Cookery — one gold star
- Western Sydney Institute, Mount Druitt: Manufacturing — three gold stars
- Sydney Institute, Ultimo College: Manufacturing — two gold stars
- South Western Sydney Institute, Chullora: Metals and Engineering — two gold stars
- South Western Sydney Institute, Miller: Electrical — two gold stars
- South Western Sydney Institute, Padstow: Horticulture — three gold stars

## How to be a...

### BUS DRIVER

**Qualifications:** State Transit Authority (STA) bus operators undertake a Certificate III in Transport and Distribution as part of their on-the-job training.

**Course description:**

The STA website states the training takes two years. The first five weeks of employment involves intensive training — three days in a classroom learning State Transit policies and procedures, a one-day depot induction module, up to eight days driver training, five days in-service training and two days of personal safety training.

Throughout the two years drivers are scheduled to attend further off-the-job training in customer service, working in a culturally diverse environment, financial transactions, workplace communication, working with others, OH&S, vehicle inspection, workplace documentation and reading road maps and routes.

After the traineeship program, if drivers are required to drive 14.5m buses or articulated buses they receive additional training to have their licence upgraded to an HR licence.

**Assumed knowledge:** Applicants must hold an Australian Class C driver's licence and have held it for at least 12 months of the past two years. You must have a good driving history.

**Costs:** None. Bus drivers are paid to learn on the job.

**From the inside:** STA bus driver Alex Tkachenko (pictured) says bus drivers often have to work odd hours.

"The trick is to hang in there because it is not too long before you can work the hours that suit your lifestyle," she says.

More information: [www.sydneybuses.info/jobs](http://www.sydneybuses.info/jobs)



## Pod Life



**scuppie n.** An urban professional who is socially conscious.

Source: wordspy.com

## Careers advice

**T**here are a couple of websites that can help narrow down the choice of training organisations.

All 1782 registered training organisations providing courses in NSW are listed on the National Training Information Service ([www.ntis.gov.au](http://www.ntis.gov.au)) website.

Users can search the website by course name or by area to find the nearest training organisation and then link through to the organisation's website.

It is worth narrowing your search to a specific course such as "Certificate III in Cabinet Making" to limit the search results to a reasonable number.

The website can also be used to check whether a training provider is registered.

The Institute of Trade Skills Excellence website ([www.itse.com.au](http://www.itse.com.au)) also lists all of the courses that have received their stars of recommendation.



# When job hunting becomes brutal



**Ask Kate**  
Editor [careerone.com.au](http://careerone.com.au)

**A**s regular readers of this column know, job hunting is an emotional business and candidates take it to heart when they get treated shabbily. I like to share these tales of woe because it makes other readers feel better about their own experiences with the silent treatment or rejection.

However, it should be remembered that many of these tales come from people who then go on to have positive experiences, landing jobs with good employers. That said, here are a few tales that really amazed me.

Two people told me about their experiences of being screened by an internet

went to 12 interviews before the company realised it had not told him that being fluent in a particular language was a prerequisite for the job. He didn't speak that language.

In the other case, the candidate attended 13 interviews before being told she was over-qualified. I can't imagine how they missed her qualifications during the previous 12 interviews.

And I also heard from an amazing candidate who had a wealth of experience in the defence forces and then in media communications in the private sector.

While based in a Queensland city, he was nominated as the preferred candidate by an employer in Adelaide. When the recruiter he had applied through failed to contact him about his application he made inquiries. She told him she had not put him forward because he was not from Adelaide.

I should point out that when I canvassed opinion among recruiters in Adelaide, they viewed her actions as unprofessional.

PS: I'm also keen to hear from recruiters and employers about their experiences.