

ATDP Frequently Asked Questions

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Advocacy Training and Development Program

The [Advocacy Training and Development Program \(ATDP\)](#) replaced the former Training and Information Program (TIP) on 1 July 2016. The ATDP is a partnership between the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), ESOs and the Department of Defence.

The vision of the ATDP is to train and develop selected practitioners to provide high quality advocacy services to current and former Australian Defence Force members and their dependents covering rehabilitation, compensation, appeals and wellbeing.

How do I find an advocate?

If you wish to contact an ATDP accredited advocate you can do so by way of the [Accredited Advocate Register \(AAR\)](#). The AAR provides the contact details of ESOs that manage ATDP accredited advocates. It provides helpful information regarding the advocacy services available in your area and detailed explanations of the different roles of compensation and wellbeing advocates.

What are the features of the AAR?

You can locate an ESO with accredited advocates and obtain their contact details by a search of the [AAR](#). The AAR will not show names or contact details of individual advocates, nor are details of non-ATDP advocates recorded. The AAR offers the flexibility of a number of different search methods to assist users, including the options of searching by postcode, physical location and organisation. The AAR also enables ESOs to self-manage their listings of accredited advocates and update organisational details by way of remote passcode access to their specific AAR record. If you would like to know more about having your ESO listed on the AAR, call [\(08\) 8290 0499](tel:0882900499) during office hours or email info@advocateregister.org.au for assistance.

What led to the ATDP?

The department commissioned an Advocacy Training Review that was led by the late Brigadier Bill Rolfe, AO. Following consultation with the ex-service community, the review found that the TIP framework needed to evolve and a working party was established to address the need for a more contemporary approach to the training and development of advocates. The Advocacy Blueprint which resulted from this work by representatives from the ex-service community was subsequently endorsed by the Ex-Service Organisation Round Table ([ESORT](#))

and the then Minister for Veterans' Affairs in late 2015. This resulted in the creation of the ATDP which replaced the former TIP on 1 July 2016.

- [ATDP Blueprint \(PDF 720 KB\)](#)
- [ATDP Blueprint \(DOCX 130 KB\)](#)

How is the ATDP administered?

The ATDP has a three-tier governance structure consisting of the following:

- [Strategic Governance Board](#) (SGB) — provides strategic oversight of the program
- [Capability Framework Management Group](#) (CFMG) — reports to the SGB and is responsible for designing and implementing the program
- [Regional Implementation Groups](#) (RIG) — report to the CFMG and are responsible for the day-to-day administration of the program

What type of training does the ATDP provide?

The ATDP provides training for advocates in compensation and wellbeing.

Wellbeing Officers Levels 1 and 2 (formerly known as Welfare Officers) are trained to assist serving and ex-serving military clients and their dependents to connect with government and community-based services and support by providing:

- information and/or referrals for health, rehabilitation, housing, transport, household assistance, education schemes, and other government or community services and benefits
- advice and information about government services for transitioning from the military to civilian life
- information and/or referrals for medical, financial, legal and police matters
- information and/or referrals for funeral arrangements and bereavement assistance
- other wellbeing advice and information as determined in discussion with the client.

Compensation Officers Levels 1 to 4 may, according to their level of training, provide advice and assistance to serving and ex-serving military clients and their dependents with rehabilitation and compensation claims, and represent serving and ex-serving military clients and their dependents before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) or Veterans' Review Board (VRB) in relation to compensation and entitlement decisions. Services may include:

- prepare and/or lodge liability, compensation and income support claims
- prepare requests for review of DVA decisions
- prepare appeals for review by the VRB or the AAT
- provide representation at hearings by the VRB and AAT

How is training delivered and assessed under the ATDP?

The ATDP employs adult learning principles in the delivery of training which assumes that adults acquire their skills and knowledge from a variety of sources. This approach is based upon research that suggests that for adults 70% of the skills and knowledge acquired comes from 'doing'; 20% comes from other informal learning such as through a mentor; while only 10% comes from formal training.

The ATDP training pathway places a great emphasis on learning on-the-job and mentoring of trainees by experienced advocates. Trainee advocates are required to record specified activities in an electronic Workplace Experience Log (WEL) which are verified by their mentor. Formal training includes completing e-learning modules at certain milestones to support workplace experiences.

The culmination of the training is consolidation and assessment which is undertaken when the WELs and e-learning are completed in a formal classroom setting over three days. This is conducted by appropriately qualified trainers and assessors who are themselves practicing advocates who must also hold the specific unit of competency which they are assessing.

What is the Course in Military Advocacy?

On 28 April 2017, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) accredited the [Course in Military Advocacy 10620NAT](#). The [ASQA](#) is the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training sector. ASQA regulates courses and training providers to ensure nationally approved quality standards are met. The ASQA accreditation means that the Course in Military Advocacy is nationally recognised and that it meets an established industry, enterprise, educational, legislative or community need.

Can I obtain credit transfers for the Course in Military Advocacy?

The [Course in Military Advocacy \(10620NAT\)](#) is an Enterprise Course and so there is no equivalency with other courses and therefore no credit transfers are

available. However skills and experience gained in the process of obtaining related qualifications or by other means including military advocacy work can be used as evidence in the assessment of a candidate's competency in the RPL process.

What qualifications are available for advocates under the ATDP?

The Advocacy Training and Development Program provides training in military advocacy. The Course in Military Advocacy is a Competency Based Training (CBT) program. The six Units of Competency available are:

- **Military Wellbeing Advocate Level 1** — Advocate qualified to assist a veteran or dependents in obtaining the wellbeing assistance they require, supervised by a suitably qualified advocate
- **Military Wellbeing Advocate Level 2** — Advocate qualified to assist a veteran or dependents in obtaining the wellbeing assistance they require without supervision
- **Military Compensation Advocate Level 1** — Advocate qualified to complete a primary claim supervised by a suitably qualified advocate
- **Military Compensation Advocate Level 2** — Advocate qualified to complete a primary claim with no supervision
- **Military Compensation Advocate Level 3** — Advocate qualified for representation of clients to submit departmental reconsiderations and primary appeals to the VRB
- **Military Compensation Advocate Level 4** — Advocate qualified for representation of clients at the AAT

How do new advocates enter and progress through the ATDP training pathway?

New advocates are nominated by their ex-service organisation (ESO), based on the [Guidelines for the Selection of Trainee Advocates](#). If considered suitable, the ESO will then nominate them to undertake Level 1 ATDP training. The ESO must, at this point, provide a mentor and commit to supporting the trainee in an appropriate manner, in the workplace, during their training.

ESO nominations can be made via [nominate a new trainee with ATDP](#). If you need technical assistance with your nomination you should [contact the ATDP](#), which includes contact details for your ATDP regional administrative support. Once Level 1 training is completed then advocates can be enrolled in

subsequent levels of training in the ATDP pathway. Again, this is done via the ATDP website.

How long does the training take?

There is no set timeframe for completion of training at any level under the ATDP. The training is competency based and is undertaken at a pace which suits the individual and their exposure to clients requiring advocacy services. This reflects the fact that some candidates will be employed by their ESOs and working full time — others will be part-time volunteers who will naturally acquire skills and experience more slowly. The purpose of the training in either setting is to ensure that advocates have the required skills and knowledge at various levels of competency such that they can provide the quality of service expected by their clients. Whilst advocates will proceed through the pathway training at their own pace it is expected that this would normally not involve more than twelve months for each competency level even when training is in a part-time volunteer setting.

Do advocates completing ATDP training receive formal recognition of their qualifications?

Yes. Certificates known as 'Statements of Attainment' are issued for each level (known as a Unit of Competency) successfully completed by candidates in the Course in Military Advocacy. These statements are posted directly to candidates by our Registered Training Organisation (RTO) within 30 days of the successful completion of either Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or ATDP learning pathway consolidation and assessment activities.

What is Recognition of Prior Learning?

RPL is a recognition process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal and informal learning) to determine the issue of a particular credit or qualification. It is an evidence based assessment against the requirements of a particular Unit of Competency.

Do experienced advocates trained under TIP have the opportunity to undertake RPL?

Yes. Experienced advocates, whether they are TIP trained or not are offered the opportunity to undertake RPL by the ATDP. Evidence of competency can include skills and knowledge which was acquired by various means including through the TIP training, e-learning or by practical experience.

The RPL processes have been carefully designed and tested by experienced advocates to ensure that they are simple and straightforward and will enable suitably skilled and experienced advocates to get on with providing services to the veteran community without having to undergo further formal or workplace training.

Does ATDP training have prerequisites?

Yes. All new advocates commencing their training must start at Level 1 (Compensation or Wellbeing). Subsequent progression along the ATDP learning pathway must be sequential. In the case of experienced advocates they may enter the program by way of RPL at Level 2. However, Level 3 and 4 qualifications must be obtained sequentially (that is, Level 2 first then Level 3 then Level 4).

How does ATDP schedule training activities?

The ATDP training schedule is developed at a national level with regional input to ensure local circumstances are factored into the planning. The scheduling of ATDP training and assessment activities is based upon the actual demand in a particular area for RPL and/or consolidation and assessment training. Invitations are sent to eligible candidates around 2 months before a program is scheduled. In case of consolidation and assessment, only when trainees have completed the required workplace learning and e-learning will they receive an invitation.

Are advocates covered by insurance?

The Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association (VITA) has been established for the purpose of providing professional indemnity insurance for suitably qualified, trained and authorised members of ex-service organisations who give advice to the ex-service community on matters relating to DVA pension and compensation entitlements and wellbeing support.

VITA also maintains an insurance policy providing basic protection for VITA members' advocates for accidents that occur at a client meeting, while travelling to and from a client meeting, and for travel to and from a training program.

Most ESOs have professional indemnity cover through VITA, although some have cover through other providers.

How long are TIP-trained advocates covered by VITA insurance?

VITA distributed an [Open Letter](#) to its ESO members on 7 December 2017 advising that professional indemnity coverage will not be available for those TIP trained advocates that have not undertaken RPL beyond 30 June 2019 for Level 1 and 2 advocacy work and 31 December 2021 for Levels 3 and 4 advocacy work.

VITA has confirmed that Level 3 and 4 advocates undertaking Level 2 work will need to complete RPL Level 2 by 30 June 2019 to be covered for this work.

For more information, please see the [VITA information](#) on the [ATDP website](#).

What is continuing professional development?

On 1 July 2018 the ATDP launched its Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program. CPD refers to the work-related learning and development that continues throughout an advocate's period of practice. CPD is one of the key mechanisms by which high standards of professional practice and the relevance and currency of qualifications and experience are maintained.

For ATDP, CPD obligations take the form of a points-based program similar to that used by many professions. The CPD program aims to ensure the continuing provision of high-quality services by accredited advocates to current and former ADF members and their dependents. It also addresses VITA's 'currency of training' requirement for maintaining professional indemnity (PI) insurance coverage of advocates. All ATDP accredited advocates that are not continuing their study by progressing along the learning pathway have CPD obligations.

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Further information

More information about the ATDP can be found by accessing the following links:

- [ATDP](#)
- [Non-liability health care \(NLHC\)](#)

Contacts

You can contact the ATDP using the following e-mail addresses:

- ATDP.COMMUNICATIONS@dva.gov.au
- ATDPENQUIRIES@dva.gov.au

You can also contact [ATDP Regional Managers and Program Support Officers \(PSOs\)](#).

Advocacy news

Advocacy News provides updates on the ATDP and articles relevant to ESOs and the advocacy community.

Past copies of the *Advocacy News* can be found on the [ATDP's website](#) — links are located in the footer (on the bottom, right-hand side).

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