



Officer Financial Training

The *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009* (RO Act) requires registered organisations and branches to ensure that officers with financial management duties have done approved financial training, unless they have been granted an exemption by the Fair Work Commission (the Commission).

The training must:

- be done within six months after taking office;
- cover each of the office holder's financial duties; and
- be a training package approved by the Commission (section 293K).

Who needs to do training or get an exemption?

Registered organisations must ensure that the officer with financial duties completes training, or has an exemption, each time they start to hold a new office. However, it may be possible that one instance of training could satisfy the training requirement when an individual commences multiple new offices, provided that it occurs at the right time.

Financial training is intended to help officers better understand their duties under the RO Act. It protects officers, their organisation and its members.

If the office that the person holds has financial duties, the following diagram explains when an officer must undertake training or get an exemption.



Officer is re-elected to the same office



The officer is not required to do more training or have an exemption if they are re-elected to the same office without a break in service.

Example: An officer is re-elected to the branch committee as a committee member and has already done training or been exempted.

Good governance tip: You may wish to consider a refresher for your officers if it has been a while since they completed an approved training course.



Officer takes office for the first time



If the officer has been elected (or appointed) for the first time, they must do training or get an exemption.



Officer is elected to another office after undertaking approved financial training in a previous office



If the officer is elected (or appointed) to a different office **after** they have already done the training, they must either do new training or get an exemption

Example: The officer is elected to the branch committee. They complete training. The officer is subsequently elected to the office of branch President. They are required to either do training again or obtain an exemption.



Officer is elected
to multiple new
offices in a short
period of time



If the officer is elected to multiple new offices within a short period of time they are required to do training or get an exemption.

The Commission considers that one training course will satisfy the requirement for all the new offices if:

- the training occurs **after** they take up all the offices;
- the training covers all the financial duties in all offices;
and
- the training occurs **before** six months have passed in relation to any of the offices.

Example: During March an officer is elected to the branch committee in stage 1 of the election. During April in stage 2 they are elected as branch President and in May, in stage 3, they are elected to the national council. The officer undertakes training in June which is after the final election but before the six month deadline passes on any of the three offices.

Practical tip: You should consider this possibility when booking training for officers during a multi-stage collegiate election.



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Approved training

The training undertaken by officers with financial duties must be a training package that is approved by the General Manager.

The Commission has published a list of the approved training packages on its [website](#). There are options for face to face training and online training.

Getting an exemption

An organisation or branch may apply to the Commission for an officer to be exempted (section 293M) from the requirement to undertake approved training.

The General Manager may grant the exemption if satisfied that the officer has a proper understanding of their financial duties within the organisation or the branch, because of:

- their experience as a company director,
- their experience as an officer of a registered organisation or
- other professional qualifications and experience.

The exemption application should show how the officer's experience and/or qualifications are relevant to their financial duties.

The General Manager may grant the exemption subject to any condition considered appropriate in the circumstances. An exemption application needs to be made promptly. This is to allow time to undertake training within the six month period in the event that the exemption is not granted.

If an application is made after the six month period has passed, the organisation or branch may have already breached the requirement to complete training within six months unless exempted and may be liable for penalties.



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Hints to help with processing your application

- Use the Commission [exemption application form](#)
- Provide as much information as possible to support the application
- Include details which can demonstrate that the officer has a proper understanding of the financial duties of the new office that an exemption is being sought for

Applications for an exemption should be lodged by email as soon as possible after an officer commenced in their office. Application forms can be sent to regorgs@fwc.gov.au.

What penalties apply?

If an organisation or branch doesn't ensure that an officer completes financial training in accordance with the requirements of section 293K it may attract a civil penalty of 100 penalty units¹ (section 293K(2)).

What if I want to create a financial training package?

The General Manager may approve training provided by a registered organisation, a peak Council, or a body or person which the Commissioner is satisfied has appropriate skills and expertise to provide the training.

Before the General Manager can grant approval, the General Manager must be satisfied that the training covers the duties of officers that relate to the financial management of organisations and their branches (section 293L).

To help you put together training that meets the requirements, the Commission has published a [governance training checklist](#) in relation to the expected contents of financial training that is approved under section 293L of the RO Act.

¹ Section 4AA, Crimes Act 1914 defines the amount of a penalty unit.



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Find out more:



For more information about officer financial training

- Guidance note: [Duties of officers \(including case studies\)](#)
- Checklist for [Requirements of approved financial training](#)
- Find the list of [approved training packages](#)
- [Officer financial training panel discussion](#)
- Form: [Applications for exemption](#)
- [Website information](#)

If you require further advice or assistance, please email regorgs@fwc.gov.au.

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This fact sheet is not intended to be comprehensive. It is designed to assist in gaining an understanding of the relevant provisions of the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*, and the Fair Work Commission (the Commission) and its work. The Commission does not provide legal advice.