

Advocacy Training and Development Programme: Frequently Asked Questions

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1. ATDP Transition

1.01 What is the ATDP?

The Advocacy Training and Development Programme - or ATDP for short - is the next evolution of the Training and Information Program, better known as TIP. The ATDP is a partnership with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), Ex-service Organisations (ESOs) and the Department of Defence.

The vision of the ATDP is to train and develop nominated practitioners to provide high quality advocacy services to current and former Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their dependants, covering rehabilitation, compensation, appeals and welfare.

1.02 How is the ATDP different from TIP?

The ATDP will introduce a nationally accredited training program, and through competency based training and development, will help to ensure a high standard of advocacy services are provided to veterans, irrespective of where they live or when they served.

The ATDP recognises and builds on the excellent work undertaken by TIP over many years. It embraces the spirit of mates helping mates and builds on many of the initiatives that TIP pioneered energetically in developing and delivering advocacy courses.

1.03 Why are we changing from TIP to the ATDP?

TIP was a solution designed for a point in time and has served those needs well. TIP is now over 20 years old and it is time for the program to respond to changes in the veteran community along with changes and advances in learning and development practices.

In March 2014, DVA commissioned an Advocacy Training Review that was led by the late Brigadier Bill Rolfe. Following consultation with the ex-service community, the Review found that the TIP framework needed to evolve to be able to respond to changes in the environment and client cohorts.

A Working Party was formed, comprising members of DVA, Defence and ESOs who developed the Blueprint for the new program which was subsequently endorsed by the Ex-service Organisation Round Table (ESORT) and the then Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

1.04 When will the ATDP come into effect?

From 1 July 2016, the ATDP governance structure will commence managing the delivery of advocacy training and development.

1.05 What changes will occur when the ATDP is introduced on 1 July 2016?

After 1 July 2016, the ATDP will continue to manage the delivery of TIP courses for advocates that have already undertaken some TIP training until the phasing-out of TIP training from 31 December 2016. In parallel, from 1 July 2016, new trainee advocates will begin training and development in the relevant ATDP Level 1 compensation or welfare pathway.

ESOs will be invited to nominate applicants who meet appropriate prerequisites for entry into the ATDP training and development pathway.

1.06 When will the training prerequisites be made available to ESOs?

The training prerequisites will be made available as soon as they are finalised. It is anticipated that this will be circulated in time for the ATDP commencement on 1 July 2016 for ESOs to apply.

1.07 Will existing TIP courses already scheduled continue to run?

Yes, TIP courses currently scheduled will continue to be offered for those advocates who commenced training under TIP until the phase-out of TIP training courses. These courses will be visible through the online management system, accessible at www.TIP.org.au.

1.08 What differences will ATDP trainees see?

From 1 July 2016, units of training that new ATDP trainees will complete will be the same or slightly modified versions of current TIP courses. Until TIP materials are transformed to ATDP materials, the major difference from TIP will be that the units of training will be completed within a single learning pathway rather than as standalone subjects.

The ATDP training structure places a great emphasis on on-the-job learning. New advocates will be required to maintain a workplace record which contributes to evidence of competency at each of the training program exit points.

2. Governance

2.01 What governance structures oversee the ATDP?

The Strategic Governance Board (SGB) provides strategic oversight of the program.

The Capability Framework Management Group (CFMG) reports to the SGB and is responsible for designing and implementing the program.

The Regional Management Groups (RMGs) will be responsible for the day to day administration of the program and will report to the CFMG.

2.02 Who sits on the SGB?

The SGB consists of the following members:

Ms Jenny Walker	Chair SGB
Mr John Hodges	SGB Member
Mr Ken Foster OAM JP	SGB Member
Mr Richard Kelloway	SGB Member
Mr Paul Way	SGB Member (Defence)
Ms Lisa Foreman	SGB Member (DVA)
Mr Bill Kearney	Chair CFMG
Mr Greg Hoving	National Training Manager

2.03 Who sits on the CFMG?

The CFMG consists of the following members:

Mr Bill Kearney	Chair CFMG
Mr Greg Hoving	National Training Manager
Mr Roger Greene JP	Deputy Chair
Mr Clem Russell	Deputy Training Manager
Mr Brian Warren	CFMG Member
Ms Louise Povolny	CFMG Member
Mr John Printz OAM	CFMG Member (Interim)
Mr Alan Thomas JP	CFMG Member (Interim)
Mrs Helena Smith JP	CFMG Member (Interim)
Mr John Cadd	CFMG Member (Interim)

Mr Alan Robertson	CFMG Member (Interim)
Rev Dr Alan Stubbs RFD	CFMG Member (Interim)
Mr Richard Magor	CFMG Member (DVA)
Mr Glenn Whatman	CFMG Member (Defence)

2.04 Who appointed these members?

The SGB members were appointed by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs following nominations by the Ex-service Organisation Round Table. The CFMG members were appointed by the SGB and subsequently the National Training Manager and CFMG Chair also became members of the SGB.

2.05 What selection process was used for CFMG members?

Expressions of Interest were sought through ESORT and the Younger Veterans Forum. The Department of Defence and DVA also provided nominees to positions in the SGB and CFMG.

2.06 How can I find out more about these people?

Further information will be made available through the DVA website in the near future at www.dva.gov.au.

2.07 How will the regional management structure operate?

From 1 July 2016, the ATDP will be managed on a regional basis. The regional management structure will consist of three Regional Management Groups (RMGs) that will oversee the management of ATDP operations and will replace the current six State-based Training Consultative Groups (TCGs).

The RMGs will be responsible for the planning and delivery of training across the region, based on a nationally consistent curriculum, and will be accountable to the CFMG. They will also be responsible for engaging with ESOs in each region to establish effective communities of practice that will support and encourage the development and retention of advocates.

Work is still continuing in the CFMG to formalise how the structure will work and this information will be communicated when it is available.

2.08 Why has the regional management structure replaced the TIP state-based structure?

The move to a regional structure as opposed to a state-based structure is intended to better balance the workload and resources.

2.09 What will happen to the TIP State Chairs?

The TIP Chairs are interim members on the CFMG. The CFMG agreed that the TIP chairs from the three largest states will temporarily perform the roles of Regional Managers up until December 2016 when these positions will be filled permanently.

Expressions of Interest will be sought from ESO and TIP networks for appointment to the Regional Manager Groups. The new Regional Managers will be nominated by members of the RMG once they have been shortlisted.

2.10 How have the new governance structures harnessed the expertise and experience of TIP?

Existing TIP Chairs are interim members on the CFMG and the TIP chairs from the three largest states will temporarily perform the roles of Regional Managers. These individuals are: Helena Smith (Qld and NT), Allan Thomas (NSW, ACT and WA) and John Printz (Vic, Tas and SA).

Their experience will prove invaluable in informing the incoming Regional Managers.

2.11 How will the program ensure it is relevant for younger veterans?

The SGB and the CFMG have identified a number of forums to seek initial engagement with younger veterans, including the Younger Veterans Forum facilitated by DVA. The SGB and the CFMG will be working closely with RMGs to identify other ESOs with specific interest in younger veterans to engage their members and local communities.

3. Training, Accreditation and Recognition of Prior Learning

3.01 What is a single learning pathway and how will this be applied under the ATDP?

The learning pathway refers to the specific courses, programs and learning experiences that individual trainees complete as they progress toward qualification.

Under the TIP approach advocates were able to select from a range of different courses according to their interests and utilise multiple learning pathways. Under the ATDP this will no longer be the case and all learning will be through a single pathway. The single learning pathway under the ATDP will provide a consistent and structured approach to learning that will ensure all advocates gain the necessary skills and knowledge they need to assist a much broader range of clients.

The single learning pathway will apply across all levels of competency, from levels one to four in the compensation stream and levels 1 to 2 in the welfare stream. This will ensure that advocates are adequately trained and experienced before progressing to the next level.

3.02 If I was trained under TIP, will I have the opportunity to be accredited under ATDP?

Yes, all trainees will be offered the opportunity to be accredited under the ATDP. Your previous training and workplace experience will be taken into account through a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process. There will be various entry points into the ATDP single learning pathway and they are being designed to ensure they are flexible with minimal impact on advocates.

3.03 I am currently authorised by my ESO to provide advocacy services. Do I have to be accredited by 1 July 2016?

No, from 1 July 2016 you will continue to operate as you currently do now. The RPL frameworks are being developed and are expected to be completed in the coming months. Once these are developed, we will communicate these to you.

3.04 If I don't want to get accredited under the ATDP can I still provide advocacy and welfare support?

The ATDP is the new advocacy model endorsed by ESORT and the Government. TIP training will cease which will ultimately mean if advocates do not transition across to the ATDP you will not be able to keep your knowledge and skills up to date. You may also face indemnity insurance coverage issues and advocates are encouraged to talk to their ESO about such matters.

3.05 Does someone have to be a member of an ESO to be an ATDP practitioner? If so, which ones?

Yes, under the ATDP model advocates are nominated by an ESO for training and the ESO will provide on-the-job training and mentoring to advocates to support them through the accreditation process. Workplace assessment will also occur utilising the community of practice approach to ensure support for those who may not have a trained mentor or workplace assessor within their local ESO.

3.06 I've heard RPL is really time consuming, is this true?

No, the Department has engaged a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to assist and streamline this process in a way that it will be as simple as possible and will not adversely impact on your current activities. The process will be piloted with a small group of practising advocates before it is made widely available to nominees.

3.07 As an advocate, wouldn't my time be better spent on supporting clients rather than RPL?

The RPL will be designed to limit the impact to advocates as we understand advocates are volunteers and that they are busy providing services to the veteran community.

RPL will also enable you to subsequently undertake mentoring and workplace assessment training which will enable you to utilise your skills and experience to develop the next generation of advocates who will serve the veteran and ex-service community. Obtaining ATDP accreditation will also help to ensure that clients seeking advocacy services in the future will have ready access to the services of accredited advocates.

3.08 How will the RPL work?

The transition process to ATDP accreditation will be gradual and voluntary. Proposals for RPL and entry points into the new ATDP pathway will be developed in conjunction with the RTO and will be widely circulated when finalised to enable Advocates to consider the options available.

3.09 Will the RPL process involve more study?

It will depend on each individual case. The RPL is designed to be simple and allow current advocates to provide the necessary evidence that they possess the relevant competencies and related knowledge to become accredited. Where this can be demonstrated then further study is unlikely to be necessary to become accredited. Where competency or skills cannot be demonstrated then some further training may be required.

The above principles apply to both Pension and Welfare officer RPL processes. An alternative stream will be available for Welfare accreditation to assist Welfare Advocates in this process.

There will be training and a place for everyone.

3.10 After the implementation of the ATDP on 1 July 2016, will I be able to operate under TIP?

From 1 July 2016, the ATDP governance structure will commence managing the delivery of advocacy training and development. However authorised advocates will not be affected in terms of their capacity to continue to perform functions as authorised by their ESO.

3.11 As a practitioner, am I responsible to my ESO or to the ATDP governance bodies for what I do?

To your ESO. The ATDP is only overseeing the accreditation and training of advocates.

3.12 My ESO conducts training. Do I have to undertake ATDP formal training?

The competency based training process assumes that adults acquire their skills and knowledge from a variety of sources. Under the ATDP model it is assumed that 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.

Any training conducted by ESOs to support their advocates in the process is welcomed and contributes to the 90% gained outside of the formal learning process. Such training must be aligned and consistent with ATDP requirements.

It must be understood though, that the 10% of learning supplied by ATDP formal training, also includes assessments of the other 90%. The ATDP then certifies that an individual has met the required standard for a certain level. It is therefore necessary that every advocate undertakes the ATDP formal learning and assessment process.

3.13 Do I have to have a mentor if I've been practicing for 10 years or more?

Participation in a community of practice will be strongly encouraged both in terms of the expected benefit to each individual through on the job mentoring as well as to the overall improvement of advocacy services. Details of mentoring requirements will be made available in the coming months once the mentoring strategy has been finalised with the RTO. The benefits of peer review should never be discounted regardless of one's level or experience.

3.14 I have volunteered to be a mentor for a new learner. What will be required of me?

The role of the mentor is fundamental to the success of the ATDP program. It is assumed that having volunteered and subsequently been nominated by your ESO to be a mentor, you are highly experienced as either (or both) a welfare or compensation advocate. Once you have been nominated, you will be contacted by the ATDP and asked to undertake an RPL process which validates your experiences and verifies that your skills and knowledge meet the requirements for those of a mentor to Level 2 standard or above.

3.15 What if I don't want to be a mentor?

That's fine. Only those advocates who wish to undertake formal mentoring or workplace assessment will be required to undertake the relevant training. All advocates who wish to continue to practice will however be required to undertake the RPL process when TIP refresher training is no longer available.

3.16 How is this going to make me a better advocate?

The ATDP is based upon the application of adult learning principles and competency based training to ensure nationally consistent and recognised training and development. This process involves very clear role definition and will enable your ESO to clearly understand what work should be undertaken at the various stages of the single learning pathway. Clients will also have greater confidence that they are obtaining the services from trained and professional advocates with the appropriate certification to provide those services.

3.17 What if I'm an advocate due for a refresher course after 1 July 2016? What happens?

Refresher training will continue to be provided during the transition process. Refresher courses will continue to be available on the www.tip.org.au website.

Under the ATDP it is envisaged that there will be a training and development model based upon the principles of continuous learning that will enable you to maintain your knowledge and currency.

3.18 How will welfare be included in the ATDP?

The training and development of welfare advocates is an integral part of the development of nationally accredited training programs and will be aligned with relevant competencies. The welfare course will include up-to-date information on aged care reforms and how to connect to these services.

3.19 What if I don't want to be involved in the ATDP?

Volunteering is a personal choice. The ATDP is working to ensure that it is as easy as possible to transition over to the new program so advocates can continue volunteering to assist the veteran community. The ATDP is confident that existing practitioners will see the benefits in the new program and will want to continue volunteering.

As outlined in earlier questions all current practitioners will be encouraged to have their previous training and experience recognised under the RPL process.

4. Caseload Impacts

4.01 Will cases I currently have in the system be affected by the implementation of the ATDP?

No, the processing of claims and applications by DVA is based on the information provided and will be unaffected by the transition to ATDP.

5. Insurance Coverage

5.01 How will this ATDP affect my VITA coverage?

The Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association (VITA) has been engaged by the ATDP and is working with its insurer to ensure its members will be covered with the transition and full implementation of the ATDP. This work is currently happening and any developments will be communicated as they occur.

The implementation of the ATDP is not expected to have any significant impacts on VITA coverage.

5.02 Will I still be covered by VITA insurance based on my TIP training if I don't get ATDP accredited?

In the short term yes, both TIP and ATDP will be covered until the ATDP courses are fully implemented.

5.03 What are the insurance impacts for ESOs or individual advocates who use their own insurance cover rather than VITA?

The transition and implementation of the ATDP is not expected to have any significant impact on insurance coverage. For those currently insured under different arrangements, i.e. not VITA, individual policy holders will need to brief their insurer on the ATDP implementation and seek their advice.

6. Impacts to ESOs

6.01 How are we going to recruit and train suitable mentors?

A mentoring strategy and a training course for potential mentors will be developed in conjunction with the RTO. It is anticipated that mentors will come from the existing Level 2 Welfare and Level 3 and 4 Compensation Advocates.

6.02 What happens if we cannot recruit qualified mentors?

Initial feedback from the present Level 2 Welfare and Level 3 and 4 Compensation Advocates who have been approached, indicates that this is unlikely to be a problem.

6.03 Will there be any monitoring of the standard of work of advocates?

Yes, the ATDP will focus on quality assurance and lifetime learning to ensure advocates are fully supported to deliver high quality advocacy services.

The continuing improvement of any training system relies on feedback as to its effectiveness. The strategies for obtaining and assessing this feedback in the ATDP will be developed in conjunction with ESOs and the RTO over the coming months.

6.04 How will an advocate's e-Learning progress be monitored?

Under the ATDP all advocates undertaking training will have access to a facilitator who is able to monitor their progress and assist with understanding the unit content. The ATDP online management system also serves to record completions of e-Learning courses and the progress of an advocate through all the units required for a particular level of training. It is expected that ATDP Regional Managers will utilise these existing arrangements for e-Learning within their Region.

6.05 What are Communities of Practice and how will these work under the ATDP?

A Community of Practice is a network of advocates and community members who support one another within a locality such as a state or region. It is a group of people who engage in collective learning and provide support to one another through mentoring, knowledge-sharing and networking. While there is no one-size-fits-all model of a Community of Practice, it is envisaged that these groups will either meet face-to-face or communicate by telephone or in an online forum. All will be welcome to be involved in these communities, including ATDP trainers, ESO volunteers, advocates of all levels of experience and veterans and their family members who share an interest in supporting advocates in the community.

A central focus of the Communities of Practice will be the mentoring experience from one advocate to another, which is fundamental to the success of the ATDP. Mentoring will enable advocates to learn and gain experience from their peers. Communities of Practice will facilitate these networks by providing local support and mentoring to practicing advocates.

7. Need more information or want your own question answered?

The CFMG is developing a range of communications material and information for distribution to all stakeholders.

This will be made available in a variety of ways, including by:

- Letters and information sheets
- Email
- Through the ESO Round Table;
- The DVA website
- The ATDP and the TIP website

A general mailbox has also been established for people to contact DVA for information on the ATDP. The email address is: ATDPEnquiries@dva.gov.au