



PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

# STUDENT HANDBOOK

FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

“The key to growth in the construction industry is  
knowledge gained through education and training”

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# From the Vice President of Training

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On behalf of the Board of Directors of ABC Institute, the Apprenticeship Trade Committees, and the staff of ABCI, I want to take this opportunity to welcome you to the construction industry and the apprenticeship program.

This handbook is written expressly for the apprentice and other individuals who are considering careers in the construction industry. As you begin your new career, you should be thoroughly familiar with the career field, the nature of the program, and its values and requirements. This is especially important when the program involves training for a lifelong occupation.

The general increase in building construction at the present time demands a great number of highly-skilled craft workers. Current construction methods used to build modern offices, homes, and factories requires the highest degree of proficiency, knowledge and workmanship. Today, the successful construction worker must have both the “know-how” and the “know-why” skills of the trade to succeed in this challenging and rewarding career field.

Over the years the construction industry has changed; technological advances have created new improvements, new ideas, and new processes. Today, the work involved in all the construction fields is so closely related to technical and theoretical concepts that only a trained person can do the job. Since 1975, ABCI has been providing individuals (much like yourself) with the knowledge and skills that you will need for safe, successful careers in the construction industry.

The ABC Institute (ABCI) apprenticeship training programs have been developed to provide you with the quality educational and practical skills that you will need to build your successful future. The successful completion of apprenticeship training leading to Journey-person certification is the first step on the career ladder. The ABCI staff is here and available to help you climb the ladder of success, please feel free to call on them should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*Ruth Tirado*

Vice President of Education and Training

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# Introduction

ABCI currently offers registered (group-non-joint) apprenticeship and craft training in the electrical, fire sprinkler fitter, line erector (high-voltage electrician), sheet metal, plumbing and HVAC trades. Other career training fields are available through our national affiliation with the Associated Builders and Contractors. In addition to apprenticeship training, ABCI offers upgrade and specialized training in the areas of licensing, certification, business management and safety. As a non-profit corporation, ABCI serves to improve the quality of construction and safety in the industry through education.

## **Description of the Trade**

Regardless of the trade you choose, the construction field is an area in which individual ability and skill is recognized and rewarded. The surroundings and working conditions of the industry are favorable to the worker. The industry offers opportunities for indoor and outdoor work. Working hours and conditions of the trades permit the individual to find pleasure in doing a first-class job. The craft-workers on the job have the opportunity to deal with customers and individuals from other trades; therefore, personal conduct on the part of each worker affects future advancement of the individual, trade and industry.

## **Opportunities in the Trade**

The general public's interest in building construction at the present time demands a greater number of skilled craft-workers. The modern home, office and factory require a higher degree of proficiency in construction work. The constant increase in new types of construction, new equipment, tools and methods as well as increased construction and safety regulations offers increasing employment opportunities for qualified individuals.

Technological advances have created new improvements, new ideas, and new processes. It is necessary for the apprentice to be familiar with these developments in order to advance in the profession. The increased use of this information by the craft worker makes the trade more interesting and desirable.

The opportunity is open for the apprentice to become a first-class journey-person by understanding new phases of the trade. A first-class journey-person can advance to the position of foreman, project manager, estimator, or supervisor. The industry is in need of individuals with a complete knowledge of the practical and technical phases of the trade.

# Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship training is the oldest method by which an individual can gain the knowledge and experience necessary to enter a skilled trade or craft. Under traditional apprenticeship, an individual was indentured into the trade for an indefinite number of years. During this period, the individual, under the instruction of a master craft person, would learn the “mysteries” of the trade. Today, ABCIs’ modern apprenticeship programs are built upon this proven approach and combine it with the latest in education and training technology.

When you enter into the apprenticeship program you must maintain employment within your trade. This employment will provide you with the practical hands-on training and the “know-how” skills of the trade. You will also be enrolled into a related educational program where you will attend classes to gain the equally important “know-why” knowledge necessary to become a first-class journey-person.

## **Values of the Apprenticeship Program**

1. Apprenticeship is an educational experience for the apprentice.
2. The apprentice training program provides for training on an organized basis.
3. A controlled apprenticeship brings together the fundamental factors, which are necessary to produce a skilled craft worker.
4. Apprenticeship is the most practical and efficient means of training a skilled craft person.
5. An apprenticeship program benefits the trainee, the employer, and society because all benefit from better workmanship.
6. The successful apprentice profits accordingly to his or her skill. It is advantageous to have the highest qualities possible.

## **Qualifications for Apprenticeship**

1. Age:  
Applicants for apprenticeship must be 18 years of age or older.
2. Education:  
The apprentice should be a high school graduate or equivalent and be able to prove to the Apprenticeship Committee that they have the ability and aptitude to master the craft and satisfactorily complete the training program.

For those lacking a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, ABCI has programs available to assist you in obtaining this important certification during your apprenticeship training.

3. Aptitude:

An apprentice should be eager to learn the skills and technical information necessary for success in the trade. The apprentice is expected to have a working knowledge of mathematics since this aids in the understanding of the important and necessary theories and formulas used in the trade.

4. Physical:

Your general health should be good and you must be strong enough to perform certain duties. The construction trade also requires a considerable amount of moving about, lifting, climbing, and working at heights, in confined spaces and under conditions, which require muscular action and exertion. In addition you should be able to work in different types of climate.

5. General:

The apprentice must like to work with their hands and should be interested in the general theory of their craft. The trainee must like to work with others in a cooperative manner. Often, it is necessary for individuals to work in pairs and also with individuals in other trades. Construction work requires a liking for outdoor as well as indoor work, and a willingness to do a fair share of manual labor.

## **Responsibilities of the Apprentice**

Related training (educational) programs and on-the-job work experience provide the apprentice with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skill necessary to become a skilled craft-person. It is the apprentice's responsibility to make the most of these opportunities.

The apprentice is expected to take an interest in his or her work, to have a desire to learn, to fit into the employer's organization, to know the correct relationship of the apprentice to the journey-worker, to plan and organize his or her work efficiently, to be resourceful, and to know how to conserve materials.

The apprentice is further expected to be punctual, to maintain good health, to develop initiative and leadership, to cooperate in every way, to be neat in personal appearance, and to practice safe working procedures at all times.

The apprentice is also expected to keep abreast of new facts, new ideas, and new procedures in their trade. Because an apprentice is expected to continue learning while earning, the trainee must be prepared to attend school to obtain the necessary technical and related instruction.

## Related Instruction

Generally, the apprenticeship agreement requires the apprentice to attend classes in related subjects for a minimum number of hours (typically 152) per year. These classes are generally held 1 or 2 nights per week and are 4 or 3 hours in length. Other programs, such as Line Erector, hold classes 8 hours in length on alternating Saturdays. ABCI, your Apprenticeship Coordinator, and your Instructor will advise you of your class schedule and meeting dates.

The program of related instruction consists of courses based on divisions of work within your trade. For example; the electrical program consists of courses in residential wiring, commercial wiring, industrial plant wiring, as well as maintenance and repair. Each course includes such information as trade science, trade mathematics, and trade theory and practice.

## On the Job Training

Typically, the length of your apprenticeship will be 3 to 4 years. During this period you will be granted credit for the work experience you gain on the job. The on-the-job training component is an important part of your apprenticeship. **To ensure that you are granted credit, you will be required to complete a work process sheet on a monthly basis. It will be your responsibility to enter the number of hours you work in each of the given trade categories, complete all information and to submit a copy of the record to your employer and ABCI for entry into your training record.**

**Be advised the on the job training/learning form is an approved document by the Florida Department of Education and on the federal level Department of Labor. The form is to be signed in the designated area by your supervisor and you. Anyone is subject to termination from the apprenticeship program if they Fraudulently:**

- **Sign a Supervisor's name**
- **Indicates to be employed by a company when they are not**
- **Submit hours they did not work**

# Policies and Procedures

As a state and federally registered training program, we are required to comply with many mandatory training guidelines and regulations. The following information will help us to accomplish these objectives and give you a better understanding of your responsibilities.

## **Application for Apprenticeship**

To apply for apprenticeship, you must complete and submit the application for apprenticeship. In addition to fully completing this application, you are required to provide ABCI (within 30 days of your application) a copy of your Birth Certificate or a copy of a valid driver's license showing your date of birth, social security and resident card if applicable. If you are a High School Graduate or have completed an equivalency degree program, a copy of these certificates are also required. The final documents you will need are two letters of reference. One of these must be from your employer recommending you for the apprenticeship program. Your Instructor or Apprenticeship Coordinator can assist you in this area.

After your application and the required documents are received at the ABCI office, your training file will be presented to the Apprenticeship Committee for your trade. The committee will review and approve or deny your application for apprenticeship. After you have been approved for the program, you will be registered with the appropriate agencies as an indentured apprentice.

Since this process takes some time, to avoid delays in your training, you will be immediately enrolled into the related training classes and the apprenticeship program for your trade on a probationary basis.

## **Probationary Period**

The probationary period shall not exceed 365 days of reasonably continuous employment with a participating contractor-employer and related training program. During the probationary period, the apprenticeship agreement may be cancelled by the committee upon the request of either party involved for due cause. For example, personal conflicts, lack of progress, or a lack of interest or aptitude may be cause for cancellation.

After the probationary period, the agreement may be cancelled by the Apprenticeship Committee after adequate cause has been shown and all parties to the agreement have had an opportunity to be heard.

## **Terms of Apprenticeship**

The term or length of your apprenticeship is established by industry standards and regulatory guidelines. Typically, an apprenticeship term is for four years and consists of a total of 2,000 hours of reasonably continuous employment and 152 hours of related instruction per year.

## **Credit for Experiential Learning – Advanced Placement**

The apprenticeship committee will evaluate all requests for advanced placement based on prior training, employment and/or education. To apply for this credit, you must notify the committee (through ABCI) in writing and provide them with employment records, diplomas or other supporting documents. Upon the committee's evaluation and approval you will be given credit and/or a by-pass exam and placed into the appropriate year of the apprenticeship program.

## **Program Completion**

Upon successfully completing each year of the program, the Committee will issue a certificate of training and promotion.

After successfully completing all of the program requirements, you will be issued appropriate certificates from the Apprenticeship Committee and the Florida Department of Education's Bureau of Apprenticeship recognizing your completion of a registered apprentice-training program. In addition to these certificates, in locations where the program is operated within the local school district, you will receive an additional certificate recognizing your completion of the educational and related training requirements. Each of these certificates are recognized standards of training throughout the United States and will serve to qualify you to sit for the journey-person examination.

## **Wages**

Periodically your Apprenticeship Committee conducts a wage survey of the contractors/employers sponsoring apprenticeship training to determine the average wage rate of entry-level journey-persons in your trade. From this data, the apprentice wage is calculated.

The apprentice wage is based on a percentage of the surveyed wage rate and your time in the program. The wage progression is at 6-month intervals beginning at 55% of the surveyed wage and increasing by 5% for each six-month step you successfully complete. Your Instructor or Apprenticeship Coordinator can provide you with the current scale for your trade.

The calculated (average) value establishes your minimum hourly wage. Your employer may pay you more but not less than this amount. At the end of each six months you are in the program, your work (on-the-job) and school records will be evaluated. Upon satisfactory completion of this evaluation, you will be entitled to the 5% pay increase. **It is important that you understand that if your employer is paying you more than the minimum amount determined from the wage survey, you are not automatically entitled to the 5% wage increase.**

Aside from conducting the wage survey, ABCI cannot become involved in the issues of wages. Your wages are an issue and an agreement between you and your employer. ABCI will assist you in these matters, should your wages fall below the program standards for your apprenticeship step. Your wages should also be considered confidential and should not be discussed with other apprentices.

## Quitting an Employer

As a registered apprentice, you have agreed to work for a contractor-employer. The contractor-employer in turn has agreed to sponsor and support your apprenticeship and the program.

Prior to changing employers, you are required to notify ABC Institute by providing a completed request to transfer between participating employers form. This is to ensure proper credit of on the job training hours and company sponsorship is registered. Failure to submit the completed transfer procedure may result in non-O-J-T credit hours and deregistration of your apprenticeship.

The reason for this action is to help ensure sponsorship of the apprenticeship program is correctly reflected with FDOE/DOL apprenticeship records.

## Related Training

As discussed earlier, your related training is an important part of your apprenticeship-training program. To ensure that each trainee has the opportunity to achieve the maximum of their potential, it is necessary to implement and enforce certain policies to minimize the disruptions to your training which might be caused by the actions of other apprentices.

Apprenticeship is adult education. The classroom and lab training are critical to the success of each apprentice.

Disruptions by an apprentice will be immediately dealt with by your Instructor and if warranted, by the Apprenticeship Committee.

The Instructor has the authority to immediately dismiss an apprentice for disruptive behavior.

1. Schedule:

Your Instructor will provide you with a class schedule (calendar). Typically your classes will be scheduled for two nights per week from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. or on alternating Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. You are required to attend the full class session. Any apprentice leaving class after break or lunch, without permission, will be counted as an unexcused absence for the entire class.

2. Absences:

All apprentices must make up missed classes, 1 day equals to 3, 4 or 7 hours of instruction. ABC Institute's policy, if an apprentice is absent he/she must make up the class(es) by the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive scheduled class. If the absenteeism is not made up in the allocated time the apprentice shall be suspended and not allowed to attend the (4<sup>th</sup>) class; therefore he/she must make up all missed class time before the scheduled school year has ended and will not receive their promotion certificate until their obligation is met. More than 3 absences in a school year may result in mandatory appearance before the apprenticeship committee.

If you find that it will be necessary for you to be absent from class, you should notify your Instructor, Apprenticeship Coordinator or the ABCI office as early as possible. Upon your return to class, you will be required to complete an Apprentice Absentee Form (available from your Instructor). This form will list the days and reasons for your absence and will be forwarded to ABCI and the Apprenticeship Committee for evaluation and action.

Excessive absences as well as your failure to complete make-up deadlines will lead to disciplinary action, which could result in your termination from the program.

3. Tardies:

Tardiness to class will also not be tolerated. You should be in the classroom, ready to learn, at least 15 minutes before the scheduled class starts. Three tardies will be considered as one unexcused absence and will be processed the same as absences by the Apprenticeship Committee and ABCI.

#### 4. Grades - Evaluations:

Your performance in related training will be evaluated on a 2-part basis each month. First, your Instructor will evaluate your performance, attendance and participation in class. Second, you will be given a cumulative numerical and letter grade, which will be determined from the grades you obtain on the lesson quizzes, mid-term and final exams.

The numerical and letter grading structure for this program is:

90 - 100	....	A
80 - 89	....	B
70 - 79	....	C
69 - 0	....	D - Incomplete

Note: In order to be granted credit and have your exam results recorded in the National Center for Construction Education and Research registry, you must achieve a score of 70% and pass the module practical application task(s).

After 30 days of the initial test date an apprentice will be allowed to retest once. The highest score an apprentice may achieve on a retest is 70%. If an individual obtains a 70% Grade Point Average (GPA) for the school year he/she will be allowed to retest after the 2<sup>nd</sup> related instruction term has ended. The score for 3 or more attempts on a retest will **not** be applied to the student's GPA. Multiple retests are only for the purpose of completing all of NCCER's modules in the individual curriculum level.

Your scores will be recorded on a monthly evaluation form, signed by you and your Instructor. A copy of this report will be given to your employer twice per related instruction term and to ABCI for inclusion in your apprentice training file.

## Individual Recognition

At the end of each training year the records of each apprentice class will be reviewed to identify and select apprentices for the following special awards which serve to recognize their efforts and hard work:

1. Certificate of Promotion

Apprentices who successfully complete the yearly training program requirements will be issued a certificate recognizing the attainment and promotion to the next apprenticeship step.

2. Honor Student

Any student with a 95 GPA (grade point average) or higher for the year will be recognized as completing that year with Honors.

3. Perfect Attendance

In order to receive this award, the apprentice must not have had any absences (excused or unexcused) or been late to class during the academic year.

4. Most Improved

This award recognizes the individual who has demonstrated the greatest effort in class participation and worked the hardest to complete the training year. The individual receiving this award is selected by their peers and approved by the Instructor.

## Grievances

As in most life endeavors, a situation might arise in which you disagree. This could involve an Instructor's evaluation, absences or other apprenticeship training policy or procedure.

The following procedures will be used to resolve these misunderstandings as quickly as possible. It must be stressed that your actions in these regards should not disrupt the related training classes or affect other apprentices.

1. Your first course of action should be to calmly discuss the problem or situation with your Instructor. Often a simple discussion or explanation before or after class is all that is needed to resolve most problems.
2. Should this discussion with your Instructor not resolve the problem, you should contact your Apprenticeship Coordinator. This individual is, in effect, your guidance counselor and acts as the liaison between your employer, Instructor, ABCI and your Committee, and often can resolve the misunderstanding.
3. Should this action also fail, you should request an appointment with ABCI's Vice President of Education and Training. This request should be made in writing and submitted to ABCI through your Coordinator. You will be advised of the time and date of your appointment.
4. Should the Executive Vice President be unable to resolve your problem, you may request (in writing) the opportunity to appear before your Apprenticeship Committee at their next scheduled meeting. Your request should clearly state the problem you are experiencing, the actions that have been taken to resolve it, as well as your ideas as to what will be required to resolve the matter.
5. Your final appeal is a written request to appear before the ABCI Apprenticeship Committee at their next scheduled meeting. The committee holds the final authority in resolving disputes and misunderstandings involving the Apprenticeship Training Program.

## Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy as to Students

ABC Institute admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school-administered programs.

### Equal Opportunities

ABCI provides equal opportunities in training for those seeking education in the construction industry.

ABCI will provide equal opportunities in the recruitment, selection, training and advancement of minority and female apprentices. ABCI makes the following affirmative action commitments:

1. Disseminate information concerning the nature of apprenticeship and craft training, availability of opportunities, sources of apprenticeship applications, and the equal opportunity policy. Such information shall be disseminated at least 30 days in advance of the earliest date for application at each interval. Information will be disseminated to government employment service offices, local schools, women's centers, outreach programs, principal minority groups, women's organizations and community organizations which can effectively reach minorities and women. This information shall also be published in newspapers which are circulated in the minority community and among women as well as the general areas in which the program sponsor operates. Copies of this information shall be sent to the Registration Agency field office that services the respective program.
2. When possible, participate in workshops conducted by employment service agencies for the purpose of familiarizing schools, and the employment service with apprenticeship training and its current opportunities.
3. Cooperate with local school boards and vocational education systems to develop programs for preparing students to meet the standards and criteria required to qualify for entry into apprenticeship programs.
4. Encourage the establishment and utilization of pre-apprenticeship, preparatory trade training, or other programs, designed to afford related work experience or to prepare candidates for apprenticeship.
5. Engage in such other activities, when identified, that may further the entry of minorities and/or females into apprenticeship. **Title 29 CFR Part 30**

## **Record Keeping**

Records of the apprentice's on-the-job work experience and related instruction shall be kept and maintained by the ABCI Staff/Committee. This information shall be furnished by the apprentice from his work record.

All records regarding each and every apprentice shall be presented for review when requested by the Registration Agency or its authorized representative(s).  
**6A-23.004(2)(f) FAC**

All students' records shall be kept at the ABCI administrative office for 5 years after he/she has departed from ABCI.

## **Summary**

1. ABCIs' Apprenticeship programs are state and federally approved.
2. Apprenticeship training is approved by the Veterans Administration.
3. Apprenticeship training is open to all qualified individuals regardless to sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin.