



INTERNS AUSTRALIA

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Current issues with internships



- Virtual prerequisite for employment in many Australian industries
- Widespread non-compliance with laws relating to pay and conditions
- Lack of value in internships - from poor education and experience outcomes, to outright scams
- Which has lead to: exploitation of interns; low SES participation in internships

Internships and the law



- The general principle: all interns entitled to minimum pay and conditions
- But, no entitlement to pay and many conditions if:
 - Vocational placements - must receive course credit
 - Volunteers - determined by mutual obligations, degree of control, length of time, whether work would otherwise be paid, whether other volunteers used.

Rights of all interns



- Anti-discrimination protection
 - Treated less favourably because of a protected attribute
- Anti-bullying protection
 - Behaviour that risks health, such as victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening
- Occupation health and safety protection
 - Organisations must minimise risk of injury

Rights of interns as employees



- National and industry-specific minimum wage conditions
 - Maximum hours, breaks, leave, allowances
- Protection of ‘workplace rights’
 - Cannot be disadvantaged for exercising a right under statute, contract, instrument.
- Protection from unfair dismissal
 - Dismissal must not be harsh or unreasonable

Who to contact when things go wrong



- Informal support
 - UMSU, Student Services
 - Fair Work Ombudsman
- Formal complaints
 - Fair Work Ombudsman
 - Job Watch (Victoria only)
 - Australian Unions Helpline

Practical tips!



- Before the internship:
 - Use personal networks, Google, and LinkedIn to investigate the organisation's reputation, activities, senior staff
 - Try to correspond by, and formalise agreements, in writing
- During:
 - Keep a private journal of hours and tasks performed, and any incidents
- After:
 - Request a statement of service
 - Consider making a complaint



Questions