

MEAA Guidelines on MEDIA INTERNSHIPS

Internships have long been recognised as a valuable way for students and graduates to gain meaningful practical experience and training in their chosen career in media, communications and related fields – but they should never be a source of free labour.

MEAA, the largest and most established union for Australian media and creative professionals, has developed these guidelines to assist students and employers understand what an acceptable intern relationship looks like under the law.

MEAA defines a genuine internship as a relationship that offers practical hands-on industry experience in a closely supervised capacity for a finite period of time. This is very different from students or graduates being classified as an intern when really they are functioning as an unpaid member of staff.

Far too often, unpaid work is used by media companies to take advantage of young graduates desperate for a foothold in the sector. This is not acceptable.

How do I know if my internship is legal?

Use the following criteria as a guide - and pass them onto your current or future internship provider to help them understand what a legal internship looks like.

- 1 Interns should not be hired to replace employees and companies should not be employing interns in response to temporary increases in business activity.
- 2 Must deliver genuine hands on experience, education, skills and on the job training opportunities.
- 3 A vocational placement should last no longer than one semester.
- 4 Letter of recommendation at the conclusion of the program (we can provide a template to employers). If the employer does not recommend the student they must provide constructive feedback on areas needing improvement.
- 5 Hours and days worked must be reasonable so the internship does not interfere with study commitments
- 6 and still allows time to pursue other paid work. Unless they are volunteering with a charity or NGO, or receive a university credit, the intern must be paid at the appropriate Award rate.
- 6 An outline of the nature of the internship should be provided in writing prior to commencement.
- 7 Interns should be clear on their goals and expectations from the internship.
- 8 Interns should be made aware of the workplace health and safety policy and provided with a general procedures orientation.
- 9 Work delegated must be relevant to the industry and provide opportunities for students to build their skills.

Need more information?

Phone: 1300 656 513 | Email: members@meaa.org Web: www.meaa.org
Facebook: facebook.com/withMEAA | Twitter: [@withMEAA](https://twitter.com/withMEAA)

