

Internship Best Practices for Employers

The National University of Singapore (NUS) offers over 400 internship programmes with varying timelines, learning objectives and curricular requirements. You can reach out to your dedicated account manager or hire@nus.edu.sg for help with navigating the NUS internship ecosystem.

NUS Centre for Future-ready Graduates (CFG) recognizes that internships can bridge the gap between academia and industry, allow students to explore their career goals, develop critical employability and life skills, and help employers to enhance your employer brand and create a talent pipeline.

Here are some of the best practices from facilitating around 10,000 internships in an academic year.

Singapore Employment Standards and Regulatory Compliance

- [Employment Act \(EA\)](#) – Singapore’s main labour law providing the basic terms and conditions at work for employees covered by the Act.
- [Work Injury Compensation Act \(WICA\)](#) – Allows employees to make claims for work-related injuries or diseases without having to file a civil suit under common law.
- [Workplace Safety and Health Act \(WSHA\)](#) – Legislation relating to the safety, health, and welfare of persons at work in a workplace.
- [Work pass exemption for international students](#) holding a Student’s Pass in Singapore issued by the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA).
- [Central Provident Fund \(CPF\)](#) – contribution obligation of employers.

In general, the Employment Act and Work Injury Compensation Act cover employees, including internships, if there is a [contract of service](#) signed between the intern and employer. CPF contributions are also payable when there is an employer-employee relationship.

However, students undergoing internship as part of their academic course requirements in an institute or programme subsidized by the Ministry of Education are typically not subjected to the legal provisions in the Employment Act and Work Injury Compensation Act (Source: [MOM](#)). Employers are also exempted from making CPF contributions for such internships (Source: [CPF Board](#)).

Employer Responsibilities and Best Practices

To ensure quality internship experience and employer brand, employers are encouraged to adopt the following practices:

Structured Plan

- Clear description of the projects and tasks that the intern is expected to perform can help to align everyone's expectations. Revision, if any, should be mutually agreed.
- Learning and development opportunities – a good internship allows students to apply their knowledge to the industry and build transferrable [life skills](#)
- Project rigour – assign projects where students can solve complex business problems, rather than just performing administrative support

Mentorship and Supervision

- Appoint a reporting supervisor to be responsible for the learning outcomes of the intern and to ensure that the established objectives are met.
- A buddy (recent graduate) for informal support
- Regular check-ins/ evaluations to provide feedback on the interns' performance

Internship Terms and Conditions

1. Key Employment Terms

Employers are encouraged to hire interns under a contract of service that is covered by the [Employment Act](#) and to issue key employment terms (KETs) in writing to the interns.

Please refer [here](#) for the full list of KETs that must be included in a contract of service, unless the item is not applicable.

Below are some examples of KETs for reference:

- Full name of employer and employee
- Job title, main duties and responsibilities
- Start date, duration of employment and working arrangements
- Basic salary (for hourly, daily or piece-rated workers, employers should also indicate basic rate of pay (i.e. \$X per hour, day or piece)
- Notice period

2. Hours of Work, Overtime & Rest Days

Students are to adhere to the official working hours and schedule of the employer. Notwithstanding, to safeguard the wellbeing of our NUS students, companies should comply with [Part 4 of the Employment Act](#) of Singapore or the jurisdiction of in which the internship is performed, especially the hours of work, overtime, and rest days.

Note:

International students (student pass holders) undergoing a part-time work arrangement beyond the VIP Period are subjected to the MOM's guideline of working a maximum of 16 hours per week during NUS term time.

Please refer to the [Employment Act](#) for further information.

3. Attendance & Leave Matters

Annual Leave

Annual leave may be granted at the employer's discretion. Students and employers are to refer to the internship contract and employer's human resource policies. For reference, the Employment Act mandates a statutory minimum of seven (7) days of annual leave in the first year of service, with annual increase by one (1) day with each year of service, up to an entitlement of 14 days. Annual leave can be pro-rated to be number of months worked.

Sick & Hospitalisation Leave

As per the employer's human resource policies.

- Students must inform the employer as soon as possible if s/he is unable to report to work.
- A company's doctor or a government doctor must certify the sick leave.
- Interns should not be required to work extra day(s) or extend the internship to make up for medical leave. For exceptional cases such as prolonged medical leave, employers and students should inform the university for make-up arrangements (if applicable)

National Service (NS)

NSmen who are called up for In-camp Training (ICT) during their reservist periods will not be granted deferment on the grounds of internship/ academic commitments. Students may request from CFG or the faculty to provide an internship support letter as a supporting document for their application

for a deferment, if required, which is subjected to MINDEF's approval. Students may also wish to discuss with their employer for an extension of their internship to make up for time away at ICT.

4. Internship Allowances

Internship remuneration in Singapore varies widely, with most industries offering monthly stipends in the SGD 1,000 to SGD 2,000 range. The amount is to be mutually agreed between the student and employer.

For overseas internships, students are usually paid according to the industrial norms and in-market rates.

5. Insurance

NUS recommends that employers cover the intern under your organisation's insurance schemes such as medical or work injury compensation insurance, especially if they are required to work in high-risk environments (i.e. laboratories, shipyards, heavy industry environments with machinery/equipment). Learn more [about insurance coverage arrangements for NUS students](#).

For overseas internships, students and employers are responsible for checking on the visa and permit requirements for the host country and relevant immigration authorities in compliance with relevant immigration regulations. You and/or your employer are encouraged to purchase travel insurance for the entire duration of the overseas internship. Learn more about [travel insurance arranged by NUS \(accessible to students only\)](#). For travel notices, please refer to the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs website](#).

Please note that students on Leave of Absence (LOA) for internships are not covered by NUS student insurance. Employers are responsible to ensure that adequate insurance coverage is in place for the intern(s) throughout the internship period, including Work Injury Compensation (WIC) Insurance where required under the Work Injury Compensation Act (WICA). Employers are also responsible for ensuring appropriate overseas medical insurance, travel insurance, and any insurance required under the laws of the host jurisdiction for overseas internships.

6. Termination Notice

Employers and students should complete the entire internship period or the mutually agreed upon period. In case of early termination by either party, a termination notice can apply if mutually agreed upon at the time of the internship offer.

7. Intellectual Property

Employers and students should mutually agree on terms and conditions of Intellectual Property rights as per internship agreement.

8. Confidentiality of Information

Employers should brief the students on what constitutes confidential information, including and not limited to Personal Data as defined by the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA). Students should be made aware that such confidential information cannot be discussed or shared externally. If necessary, a non-disclosure agreement should be signed between students and employers.

9. Safe Learning and Working Environment

Under the [Workplace Safety and Health \(WSH\) Act](#), employers are responsible for ensuring safe workplaces for all employees, including student interns. Any behaviour (physical, verbal and/or written), carried out by managers, colleagues, or other people encountered at the workplace (e.g. customers, contractors, other interns and volunteers), whether in or outside of the workplace, that causes or is likely to cause harm, harassment, alarm or distress to our students will not be tolerated. Such behaviour creates an unfavourable work environment for him/her, which poses a risk to their safety and health. NUS will investigate all reports of such behaviour and will not hesitate to ensure that appropriate action is taken against any person(s) or organisation where necessary.

Internship Timelines

Our academic year starts from August to the following July, consisting of two semesters – August to December and January to May, with 5-week vacation during December to January and 12- to 13-week vacation during May to July.

Semester-long Internships

- Duration: 5 to 6 months (during semester)
- Recruitment Timeline: One semester ahead
 - Sem 2 internship to be posted by Oct in Sem 1
 - Sem 1 internship to be posted by Mar in Sem 2
- Subject to the respective Faculties' approval

Vacation Internships

- Duration: 1 to 3 months (during vacation periods)
- Recruitment Timeline: Throughout the year
- Subject to CFG's approval



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