Helping protect international students against workplace exploitation

Information and resources tailored to the international student journey

Education Provider Toolkit

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Education
What is workplace exploitation?

Workplace exploitation is a broad term that refers to workers not receiving their minimum rights at work, most typically in the form of underpayment.

International students are particularly vulnerable to workplace exploitation, due to an unfamiliarity with Australian workplace laws, lack of local support networks and potentially lower English language proficiency. Many international students (either intentionally or unintentionally) work beyond the legal limits of their visa. This makes them vulnerable to threats of retaliation from their employer when seeking redress for breaches of their workplace rights. Fear surrounding their visa also reduces engagement with available support services such as the Fair Work Ombudsman.

How will this toolkit help me?

This toolkit:
- Will help you protect international students against workplace exploitation
- Will help fulfil your requirements under Section 6.1 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
- Has materials that are designed specifically for international students
- Can be used by staff with minimal training on workplace rights

What is in this toolkit?

1. An explanation of your role as an education provider in helping prevent workplace exploitation
2. Free videos, flyers and other resources that your institution can share with students
3. A guide of the international student ‘journey’ as it relates to workplace exploitation, including a strategy for sharing these resources for maximum effectiveness

The resources in this toolkit have been designed with all education providers in mind. They can be used effectively by student services, student counsellors, international offices, job centres, language support services and other staff in frequent contact with international students.
Your role in helping address workplace exploitation

You can play your part by providing students with the right information at the right time to help address workplace exploitation.

Education providers can’t stop workplace exploitation at the source, but they play a key role in helping prevent workplace exploitation. Educating international students on their workplace rights, responsibilities and available support services helps students make informed choices, and enables them to get the assistance they need if in an exploitative working situation.

How can education providers help address workplace exploitation?

- By default, all international students are connected to an education provider. As such, providers are well positioned to distribute key information on workplace rights and responsibilities to students throughout their time as a student.
- Students place immense trust in their provider, viewing them as an ally and a source of reliable information. Information shared by providers is more likely to be paid attention to and considered important.
- Education providers have an obligation under the National Code to provide information to international students about services they can access on their employment rights and how to resolve workplace issues. Providers can also reflect on their own practices and policies on helping reduce workplace exploitation, examining how they can move beyond fulfilling their minimum obligations.

How does addressing workplace exploitation benefit my organisation?

**Increased student wellbeing**

The student experience does not start and stop in the classroom – workplace exploitation threatens the wellbeing and overall study experience of international students. Equipping students with appropriate knowledge on workplace rights helps safeguard students against working situations that may detract from their study experience.

**Increased reputation**

By providing students with relevant and practical information on their workplace rights, you demonstrate that you are committed to their wellbeing, leading to a strengthened brand in the marketplace amongst students and other stakeholders.

**A stronger, more sustainable sector**

Workplace exploitation of international students is a threat to the long-term healthy reputation of the International Education sector. Every stakeholder in the sector has a role to play in addressing workplace exploitation, to protect the strong brand of Australia as a safe and worthwhile location to study as an international student.

The Department of Education has also developed a best-practice model to help education providers better understand their role in helping prevent workplace exploitation of international students. You can access the model and an accompanying workbook here.
Pre-departure

Before arriving in Australia, students are thinking about the adventure of international study. They’re also looking for basic information about working rights, such as limits on working hours.

What do I share?

Simple information that highlights positive aspects of working in Australia, while giving students a realistic picture of what types of work they are likely to find while studying.

The best things about working in Australia

This video and flyer show the best things about working in Australia, to make students want to study here. Also, a great resource to share with parents!

Visit Study in Australia to find these resources - they’re free to download and made for international students!
Early arrival – orientation and beyond

Early arrival and orientation is difficult for international students – they are bombarded by information, and are adjusting to a new city, language and country. Many students start looking for work soon after arrival.

What do I share?

Basic, easy-to-digest information on workplace rights, and practical tools that are relevant to students looking for their first job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Work Ready” factsheet and checklist</th>
<th>Factsheet</th>
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<tr>
<td>This factsheet explains the most important workplace rights and laws in Australia. It includes a checklist to make sure students are ready to start work in Australia.</td>
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<tr>
<th>The warning signs of workplace exploitation</th>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Flyer</th>
<th>Diary insert</th>
<th>Poster</th>
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<tr>
<td>This video and flyer will help students recognise if something isn’t right at their job.</td>
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<th>The role of the Fair Work Ombudsman</th>
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<tr>
<td>This factsheet explains the role of the Fair Work Ombudsman – a government agency whose job it is to help employers and employees understand Australian workplace laws. There are references to some great apps and online resources in this document as well!</td>
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During their studies
At this stage, students may have encountered an exploitative working situation. Students who are in an unfair or exploitative situation at work feel isolated and unsure of where to go to find support. They may also see that their friends are in exploitative workplace situations and are unsure of what to do.

What do I share?
Information on where to go to get help, materials that reduces their fear and makes them feel less alone, and practical tools that empower students to take action.

| How to get help | ACT Flyer | NSW Flyer | NT Flyer | Qld Flyer |
|                | SA Flyer | Tas Flyer | Vic Flyer | WA Flyer |

| Case studies | Videos | Chen | Lisa | Kavya |
|             | Posters | Chen | Lisa | Kavya |

| Conversation starters with your boss | Video | Flyer |
|                                      |       |      |