Commission Internship

Program 2021

September 2020

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# Introduction

The Australian Human Rights Commission welcomes applications from students to its internship program. The Commission accepts applications twice a year and conducts a formal, structured selection process to ensure equity of access to this opportunity for the most diverse range of applicants possible.

The internship placements are open to students studying across a broad range of disciplines but highest priorities are given to those studying law, social policy, research, ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) and/or social justice areas. **All internship placements are unpaid.**

**Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we expect internships for January to July 2021 to mostly be undertaken remotely. There may be the possibility of some attendance in the Sydney office if mutually suitable and agreed. Interstate students are encouraged to submit an application given that the usual requirement to attend the office in person does not apply at present.**

The intent of the Commission’s internship program is to provide a practical understanding of human rights promotion and protection through the statutory functions of the Commission and create a broad appreciation of the scope of work the Commission undertakes as a National Human Rights Institution.

# Eligibility to apply

The Commission accepts applications from students who will be in their final or penultimate year of an undergraduate degree or in any year of a post-graduate degree during the time of their internship. Applicants must be a current, enrolled student at an Australian university at the time of the internship.

Given the high volume of applicants and limited organisational resources, preference will be given to students who are Australian citizens or Australian permanent residents.

Applicants must be covered by their university’s insurance for personal accident, professional indemnity and public liability for students undertaking a practical placement.  
  
Please note that the Commission is not able to provide Practical Legal Training placements.

**The Commission strongly encourages internship applications from students with disability and students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.**

1. **Selection**

The number of interns accepted at any one time will depend upon the current work program of the Commission.

The Commission will make a selection based on the following criteria:

* academic performance
* evidence of strong research skills
* ability to analyse and communicate complex information
* excellent written communication skills, including the ability to draft clear and concise documents, including research briefs and memos
* ability to work independently with professional guidance
* relevant work/volunteer experience and
* flexibility

# Application process

The Commission will accept written applications from students twice a year, usually during May and October. For the current advertising round, applicants will be considered for internship opportunities that may arise during **January to July 2021**.

Applicants should complete the application form available on the Commission’s website and include a one page cover letter clearly indicating their skills and experience and their area/s of interest for their placement (please be specific). The Commission’s website has information about current projects and the Commission’s broader work. Applicants should highlight any relevant subjects studied and any relevant work experience. Supplementary relevant material may be attached to the application such as a resume, academic transcript and references.

Applicants will be asked to indicate how many days per week they are available (with 2 days per week being the minimum) and any preferred placement period.

**Applicants must attach any university requirements if they are seeking course credit for their internship so that this can be considered at the application stage.**

**Applicants who have a requirement for formal practical experience as part of their course and are seeking a vocational placement should indicate this on their application form.**

Based on their written application, applicants may be interviewed by phone or in person. From this selection process, successful applicants will be assigned to teams or projects as needs arise.

Successful internships will only be offered once and unless there are extraordinary circumstances, the placement offered should be accepted and conditions met. Applications will not be accepted from previously successful interns as only one opportunity for an internship with the Commission is possible due to the high volume of applications received.

# What will interns do whilst at the Commission?

The Commission seeks to ensure that every intern experience provides opportunities to gain experience and knowledge and to create insights into the broader national and international work of the organisation. Interns are assigned to a Commission team according to organisational need and where possible to coincide with the intern’s interest areas. All activities are designed to ensure that interns receive a practical experience and feel a sense of valued contribution to the Commission’s work.

Interns will be allocated to teams or involved on projects in the Policy and Programs area of the Commission.

Under supervision, interns may be involved in research and policy analysis, draft report writing as well as attending meetings/consultations and other learning opportunities. All internship placements will involve a range of administrative support activities and interns should be aware that these activities form a necessary part of the experience. Limited opportunities may be available for interns to spend part of their placement with a Commissioner.

# How will interns be supported whilst at the Commission?

Interns will be placed in a team and allocated a supervisor for the term of the placement. Their supervisor or another team member may also provide informal mentorship. There is also an intern coordinator who will be a primary source of support before and during the placement.

Interns are encouraged throughout the course of their placement to partake in all Commission ‘staff-related’ activities, attend functions and to get involved in Commission life. This will include liaising with other sections of the Commission and participating in in-house learning and development opportunities. Interns have some opportunities to network with each other. **A remote placement will entail different opportunities to be involved.**

The health and safety of interns is as paramount as that of paid staff. Supervisors have the same duty of care to ensure that interns have a safe and healthy working environment during their placement.

# How is the internship structured?

Internships are offered in two ways:

1. A full-time block placement of up to 6 weeks
2. A part-time placement of 2-3 days/week over 6-12 weeks

Part-time attendance may suit interns who need to continue coursework during the placement. Interns can request an attendance pattern that takes into account their needs.

Interns should indicate their availability during the period January to July 2021, including any preferred days for placement.

# Internship Selection Timetable

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| October 2020 | Applications open |
| 31 October 2020 | Applications close |
| November-December 2020 | Applications reviewed/competitive applicants are interviewed |
| January-July 2021 | Successful applicants are placed as needs arise |

# Unsuccessful Applications

The Commission will decide who is successful in obtaining an internship placement and there will be no correspondence entered into following such decisions. Due to the volume of applications received it is not possible to provide individual feedback where an applicant has not been successfully placed. Unsuccessful applicants may reapply in subsequent years should they choose to do so and as long as they still meet all eligibility requirements.

# Travel and Accommodation

All interns are responsible for arranging and funding any travel and accommodation for the duration of the internship. Where interns are required to travel for work purposes whilst at the Commission, these expenses will be met by the Commission.

# Insurance

All interns **must** have insurance coverage relating to public liability and personal accident through their university policies that will cover their internship at the Commission. The Commission will need to see satisfactory evidence that shows insurance coverage before any internship may commence. Students are **not** able to purchase their own insurance for the purpose of undertaking an internship.

# Code of Conduct

All interns are subject to the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct whilst they are placed with the Commission. Interns are expected to abide by these values and behavioural expectations and any failure to comply with these will result in the ending of the internship placement.

# Technology and equipment

Whilst at the Commission, interns will have an email account, access to the Internet and a range of social media platforms. There are organisational policies that guide the use of these platforms to ensure that they are not misused.

**Interns are required to have their own equipment (such as a PC or laptop, internet connection, phone etc) to participate in a remote placement. Expenses are not reimbursed.**

# Induction

All interns will be supported by a central coordinator during their placement who will be their main support person after their supervisor. Human resources staff will provide an induction after commencement.

Interns will be provided with information and orientation to the organisation and insight into the range of activities that are undertaken Commission-wide.

# Future employment

The Commission values the contribution made by interns to the organisation. However, there is no implied or otherwise benefit of internship placement in reference to future employment opportunities. All ongoing employment opportunities at the Commission require a merit selection process where each candidate is considered relative to the competitive pool of applicants that apply for that particular vacancy. On occasion, non-ongoing employment opportunities may arise and where an intern is interested they should advise Human Resources or their placement supervisor directly.

# Statement of Attendance

The Commission appreciates that a statement of attendance confirming the interns’ successfully completed placement is a valuable record and, where requested, this will be provided at the conclusion of the internship placement. Where an intern requests a reference as a result of their placement, the supervisor may provide a summary of the tasks undertaken and the period of the placement and any other relevant details.