



Are your work rights at risk?

Australia is a great place to study and work. But, sometimes you might notice something at work that feels wrong. It may be a sign that your work rights are at risk.

As an international student, you have rights in the workplace. These rights deserve to be protected. Here are some warning signs to be aware of.



You get paid in food and housing

- It is illegal for employers to offer food or housing in place of money. Free food is fine but only if it is on top of your actual pay.
- Do not accept other forms of payment. Tell your employer you need to be paid the actual money that was agreed.



You get money taken out of your pay

- Sometimes you may accidentally break something at work, customers may leave without paying, or the cash registers are short. Employers can't take money out of your pay to cover this.
- Do not let employers take money for breakages or theft. Employers are only allowed to take money out of your pay if you agree to it, if the agreement is written down and you benefit from it.



You are asked to apply for an ABN

- An ABN is an Australian business number. You usually only need one if you are running a business.
- Not everyone needs an ABN. For most jobs, you only need a TFN - a Tax File Number.
- An employer shouldn't ask you to get an ABN as a condition of employment.



You are asked to give back some of your pay

- If an employer pays you the correct, legal amount and then asks you to give some of your pay back in cash, this is a "cashback scheme". This is not allowed.
- Do not give back money in a cashback scheme. If you have paid back money like this, it is considered a deduction and you are entitled to get the money back.



You do not get your payslips

- This means you have no record of the hours you work and how much you get paid.
- Make sure you always receive a payslip (hard copy or electronic) within one working day of getting paid.

If you see any of these warning signs, contact the Fair Work Ombudsman for help.