

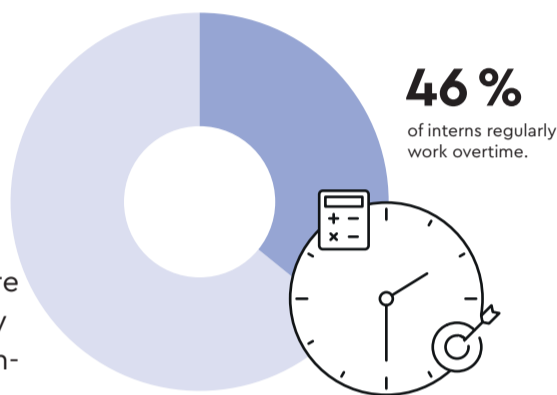


# Internship

Information for students

Today, internships are part of everyday life in college. There are many reasons for this: On the one hand, an internship is simply mandatory in some courses of study. On the other hand, internships offer the opportunity to gain professional experience, get to know companies and make contacts.

A good internship can significantly increase the chances of a successful career start.



Source: CLEVIS »Future Talents Report« 2023

## Keep an eye out when choosing an internship

An internship can be defined as an educational partnership where the primary emphasis is on acquiring knowledge. It is considered a legitimate internship, as per legal standards, only when its purpose is to facilitate learning. The primary objective of an internship is to equip you with technical expertise and assist in shaping your professional trajectory. It helps you to get to know operational processes and to get an idea about the work in an industry. To achieve this objective, your involvement in the day-to-day tasks should be limited, allowing you the opportunity to observe and familiarize yourself with the company's operations. Learning is more important in the internship than the work performed. If, in practice, work predominates and learning is pushed into the background or completely out of sight, you are considered a regular employee and are entitled to full pay.



**For fair compensation  
of all internships!**

# Internship is not second-class employment

In the case of a voluntary internship, it is only clear that the Vocational Training Act provides for appropriate remuneration. What this means remains open. However, if the internship lasts longer than three months, you are entitled to minimum wage and you may be able to negotiate more. It is important to openly and honestly discuss the matter at hand. Being hesitant or shy when discussing compensation typically leads to receiving less in terms of financial benefits.

In cases where collective agreements are in effect, trade unions have typically negotiated fair compensation regulations for internships. If your company is bound by collective agreements and you are a union member, you are entitled to this compensation. As trade union youth we demand: If there is no collective agreement, internships should be paid at least the maximum BAföG rate. For voluntary internships during studies, we demand the implementation of the legal minimum wage starting from the beginning of the internship.

All important information as well as our »Guidelines for a fair internship« can be found here: [jugend.dgb.de/dgb\\_jugend/dein-praktikum](https://jugend.dgb.de/dgb_jugend/dein-praktikum)

## Mandatory internship during studies

In many courses of study, so-called mandatory internships are stipulated by the study regulations. They are part of the academic training and serve as preparation for a profession. For these compulsory internships, there is no legal entitlement to minimum wage or any remuneration at all.

If an internship is paid, it counts as income for income tax, statutory family insurance and housing benefits. If you receive BAföG, your remuneration is counted as income in full. Unfortunately, the usual allowances do not apply in this case. Nevertheless, it is possible to make adjustments to your internship income by considering social contributions and a pro-rata flat rate for income-related expenses.

The most important thing is the income limit for family insurance in the statutory health insurance: This is 485 euros (brutto 615 euros per month).

There are also a few things to keep in mind when it comes to labor law: If you complete a mandatory internship before you start your studies, you are considered to be employed for the purpose of vocational training. You therefore have the corresponding rights, such as vacation entitlement and continued payment of wages in the event of illness (if an internship salary is paid). Social security contributions are mandatory and their calculation is based on the level of remuneration received.

In the case of a mandatory internship during your studies, the following applies again: No matter how high the remuneration is, it remains free of social security contributions. However, you are not entitled to vacation or continued payment of wages in the event of illness. Both would have to be agreed separately in an internship contract. Many protective rules for employees also apply to interns, such as the limitation of working hours, the right to breaks and rest days.

## We are the DGB Jugend – your network for studying

As trade union youth, we stand up for good study conditions, fair working conditions and a more just society. We provide you with information about all aspects of financing your studies. We advise you on questions of labor and social law. We support you in improving the conditions for students in Germany together with others. We provide support throughout your transition from university to the professional world. Additionally, we assist in advocating for and enhancing your opportunities for participation as a student at the university.

You can find us on your campus in our university offices and campus offices. Here you can find out if, when and where we are in your area. Where and when you can find us: [jugend.dgb.de/studium](https://jugend.dgb.de/studium)

## Voluntary internships

Many individuals undertake voluntary internships as a means to kick-start their careers after completing their studies. Voluntary internships are commonly pursued by individuals either after graduating to initiate their careers or prior to graduation as a means to explore and determine their preferred course of study. Different regulations apply here with regard to entitlement to the statutory minimum wage:

- 1 Before and during studies, entitlement to payment of the minimum wage only arises if the internship lasts more than three months. If the duration of the internship is initially agreed to be longer than three months, the minimum wage is applicable starting from the very first day. And if your internship is extended beyond 3 months, you may also be entitled to the minimum wage retroactively from the first day.
- 2 After graduation, the minimum wage applies immediately. However, it is crucial to consider whether starting with regular employment might be a more suitable option for you. After all, regular employment often includes a probationary period that allows for orientation and trial period.

In terms of labor law, taxation, and social security, voluntary internships are treated similarly to regular employment relationships, regardless of whether they occur before, during, or after your studies.

Online we are accessible to you anytime and anywhere – unbureaucratic, anonymous and free of charge. Our dedicated consultation forum for students offers a comprehensive overview of your rights and available options when working as a student. Additionally, we are here to assist you with any specific concerns or questions you may have. Simply fill out the contact form and send it off. We will get back to you as soon as possible: [jugend.dgb.de/studium/beratung](https://jugend.dgb.de/studium/beratung)

**SOLIDARITÄT  
GEHT IMMER!**