

# ► EMPLOYMENT Seminar

## Internships, Employability and the Search for Decent Work Experience

22 November 2021

9h30-11h00

Zoom and room XI (R2-South)

**Background:** Internships have become an integral part of the school-to-work transition. Although originating in high-income countries, they are becoming more common in low- and middle-income countries as well. But concerns have been expressed regarding the ability of internships to provide an effective bridge between education and (paid) work. In the wake of the global financial and economic crisis of 2008, the ILO Resolution 'The Youth Employment Crisis: A Call for Action' noted that 'internships, apprenticeships, and other work experience schemes have increased as ways to obtain decent work. However, such mechanisms can run the risk, in some cases, of being used as a way of obtaining cheap labour or replacing existing workers'. A decade on, the world is facing a new economic crisis, brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic which has further added to the challenges faced by young people seeking to obtain and retain decent work. Against that background, the need to resolve issues surrounding the design and regulation of internship programmes has become all the more urgent.

In June 2021, the ILO and Edward Elgar published an edited [volume on internships](#) in all their forms. Featuring important new research from established and emerging scholars working in a range of disciplines, the book discusses the extent to which countries around the world are meeting the challenge of ensuring decent work for interns, and what they might do to ensure that internships play a constructive role in the increasingly complex and lengthy process young people face in their transitions from education to employment.

**Objective of the seminar:** The purpose of the seminar is to present the main findings of the book and to discuss the impacts of internships on young people and how they might best be regulated in order to play a constructive role in their working future.

## Presentations

Niall O'Higgins (ILO), **Internships and Employability**

Anne Hewitt (University of Adelaide), **Internships, Education and Welfare**

Andrew Stewart (University of Adelaide), **Regulating for Decent Work Experience**

## Discussants

Deidre McCann (University of Durham), Jenny Ng (Fair Internship Initiative), Paul Comyn (ILO)

### Anne Hewitt



Anne Hewitt is an Associate Professor of Law at The University of Adelaide. Her research focusses on intersections of law and education, and covers topics such as the rights of students learning in the workplace, the regulation of tertiary education, and work integrated learning pedagogy. Her research has been funded by various grants, including from the Australian Office for Learning and Teaching, the Australian Research Council, and the Australian Collaborative Education Network. Anne is also passionate about curriculum design and teaching, regularly teaches internship courses, and has won numerous local and national teaching awards

### Andrew Stewart



Andrew Stewart is the John Bray Professor of Law at the University of Adelaide and a consultant with the law firm Piper Alderman. His books include Stewart's Guide to Employment Law, Creighton & Stewart's Labour Law and Cooperation at Work: How Tribunals Can Help Transform Workplaces. His current research includes Australian Research Council-funded projects on the regulation of unpaid work experience and the organisation of work through digital platforms, as well as examining the impact of COVID-19 on labour regulation. He has undertaken a number of projects for the ILO, including on the regulation of apprenticeships and internships.

### Niall O'Higgins



Niall O'Higgins is Senior Research Specialist in the ILO's Employment Analysis Unit and Professor of Economics at the University of Salerno. He holds degrees from Trinity College Dublin, York and Sheffield Universities and a Ph.D. from the European University Institute in Florence. His main research interests cover various aspects of labour and experimental economics. Previously, Senior Researcher in the ILO's Youth Employment Programme, he is one of the main authors of the ILO's biennial Global Employment Trends for Youth. Amongst his other recent publications are books on Internship and on youth employment policy and articles in the European Economic Review, the Cambridge Journal of Economics, the Journal of Institutional Economics and the B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis and Policy.