

TARIKH	19 JANUARI 2026 (ISNIN)	SURATKHABAR	BH / UM / NST / TS / HM / KOSMO
TAJUK ARTIKEL	INDUSTRIAL INTERNS DESERVE SAFETY TOO		
M/S	13 (VIEWS)	KATA KUNCI	INDUSTRIAL INTERNS
BIDANG	SAFETY		

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YOUR OPINION

THERE are approximately 250,000 students from the public and private higher educational institutions of learning in Malaysia who are required to undergo industrial internships every year. The requirement was made compulsory by the Higher Education Ministry in 2010.

In 2025, the current government mandated that companies that hire expatriates offer up to three internships under the National Structured Internship Programme for each expatriate hired. The policy became effective on Jan 1, 2026, and this is expected to create over 100,000 structured, paid placements annually.

An industrial internship offers a temporary, practical work experience for students in a company, bridging academic knowledge with real-world tasks, often focusing on specific industry skills, processes, and technologies, and structured for hands-on learning to boost their future employability.

Internships typically last between one and three months, and often form part of the final year of studies. An internship is also a stepping stone from academic to professional life. Internships are viewed as providing students with invaluable work experience to build a resume and career.

Interns do not fall under the ambit of our employment laws; they can and are often taken advantage of by employers. Their salaries or allowances are often below the mandated worker salaries. However, interns are fully

Industrial interns deserve safety too



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covered under the Amendments to Occupational Safety and Health Act 2022. The ultimate duty falls mainly on the host organisation, the company that takes in the intern. In terms of occupational safety and health, interns must be treated the same as employees and have the same protections.

For a start the host company must conduct safety induction training to familiarise interns with the company's activities and the safety and health hazards in the workplace, their prevention, and personal protections. A dedi-

cated supervisor must be assigned to constantly oversee interns, always providing clear instructions and communication.

The institutions of higher learning have the responsibility of ensuring the companies the interns are attached to have good safety and health records. They must also visit host companies to review the wellbeing of the intern in the workplace.

Most host companies have a fixed site where the intern is attached. However, some host companies carry out work outside

their company's premises. The one that comes to mind is an air-conditioner maintenance company – for them, work is conducted on their clients' premises. If an intern is assigned to such work, prior to starting it, the company must conduct a risk assessment of the area in which the intern will work and how the work process is to be carried out.

Most important of all, the assigned supervisor must always be present to ensure the intern's actions are in accordance with standard operating procedures and do not create risk.

The goal of an internship is to learn in a safe environment. But the reality is often not always as desired, as demonstrated in a recent incident of an explosion of an air-conditioner in Bukit Damansara, Kuala Lumpur, during maintenance.

In the process of internship, everyone, starting from the institute of higher learning to the company that accepts the intern, has a responsibility to ensure the intern will return home at the end of the day.

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