

**Government
Health & Safety Lead**

Government Health and Safety Internship Recruitment Guide



**Showcasing Health, Safety and Wellbeing
Careers across the Public Sector**

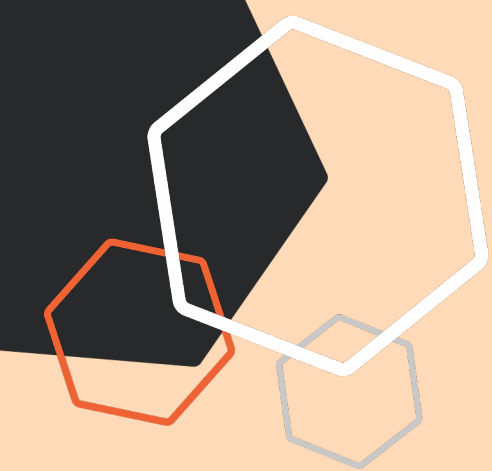
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The Government Health and Safety Lead Summer Internship Programme is a paid full time summer internship that gives students the opportunity to explore a career in health, safety and wellbeing across a wide range of public sector agencies.

Over the summer, interns are placed within a real Health, Safety and Wellbeing team at a host public sector agency. Interns gain hands-on experience, learn from experienced practitioners, and contribute to work that helps keep people safe, well, and supported at work.

The programme is co-ordinated by the Government Health and Safety Lead (GHSL) and is the only public-service-wide HSW internship programme in Aotearoa New Zealand. Intern placements may be based in different locations across the country, depending on host agency needs. Throughout the programme, interns are supported by their host agency manager and team, as well as the GHSL.

This programme is designed for students from a wide range of study backgrounds, including health sciences, psychology, environmental studies, public health, business, science, and related fields. Prior health and safety experience is not required. What matters most is interest, curiosity, and a willingness to learn.

Alongside day-to-day work, interns also take part in workshops, site visits, and networking opportunities organised by the GHSL and supported by the New Zealand Institute of Safety Management (NZISM). These experiences help bring health, safety and wellbeing to life and show how theory is applied in real workplace settings across the public sector.

Programme Outcomes

By the end of the Summer Internship Programme, interns will:

- Understand the role of health, safety and wellbeing in public sector workplaces
- Gain practical, real-world experience within a government organisation
- Build skills and confidence relevant to entry-level HSW roles
- See how HSW operates across different public sector environments
- Contribute to meaningful projects, initiatives, or improvements
- Build professional networks with other interns and HSW practitioners

The programme is designed to help students test whether a career in health, safety and wellbeing is right for them, while gaining valuable experience that supports the transition from study into the workforce.

“

“I didn't know my degree could lead to a career in Health, Safety and Wellbeing , I just thought the programme sounded like a great opportunity to put my psychology theory into practice. And that's all you need – to find something which interests you, and you might be surprised to see just how relevant your studies will be to your work.” Zung Mai.

”



The Summer Internship Programme is structured around three core components, designed to support learning through real-world experience, practical exposure, and connection.

1. Valuable work experience

Interns are employed in paid, full-time, fixed-term roles within Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) teams at host public sector agencies.

You will work alongside experienced HSW practitioners on day-to-day activities, organisational priorities, and defined pieces of work or small projects to be completed over the summer.

Examples of work interns may contribute to include:

- Risk identification, assessment and management
- Internal communications, policies, and guidance materials
- Health, safety and wellbeing initiatives
- Mental health and psychosocial harm projects
- Collecting, analysing, and reporting on health and safety data

This component provides practical experience that helps interns build confidence and capability for future entry-level roles in health, safety and wellbeing.

2. Workshops, field trips and practical learning

Alongside workplace learning, interns participate in a programme of workshops, site visits, and field trips coordinated by the GHSL.

Our field trips are an invaluable source of learning to bring health, safety and wellbeing principles to life, showing how their theory is applied in real-world workplace settings such as managing risks, hazard identification, and overlapping duties.



Don't take our word for it, listen to what our interns have to say at

<https://www.healthandsafety.govt.nz/careers-and-development/health-and-safety-summer-intern-programme/>



Interns Rebecca and Izzy on a field trip to the Airport doing a mock exercise at Customs

3. Connecting with others to build professional networks

The programme creates opportunities for interns to connect with one another and with HSW professionals across the public sector, helping build professional relationships and networks that can extend beyond the internship. These opportunities could like:

- Encouraging interns to go for lunch/coffee
- Attending speaker events with HSW Leaders from across the public sector
- Collaborating on similar intern projects and the cohort project
- Attending social events with GHSL interns from ex-cohorts to learn about their experiences after finishing their internship.

Still have questions, check out our **frequently asked questions** webpage.

Our recruitment and selection process is designed to be clear, fair, and supportive, with a strong focus on potential rather than prior health and safety experience. Ideally, we are looking for students who are curious, motivated, and interested in learning about health, safety and wellbeing in the public sector. However, if you have had any experience of health, safety and wellbeing in any of the part time roles, we would love to hear about it.

Eligibility

You are eligible to apply if you:

- Are studying in New Zealand towards an undergraduate degree
- Are in your penultimate or final year of study,
- Are available full-time from mid-November to mid-February
- Are legally able to study and work in New Zealand
- Have an interest in health, safety and wellbeing (no prior experience required)

We encourage applications from people with diverse backgrounds, including Māori and Pacific peoples, disabled people, and those with lived experience of disability.

Selection process and timelines

1. Apply online

Applications open 10 August 2026 and close 18 August 2026.

2. Shortlisting

Applications are reviewed and shortlisted.

3. Video interview

Shortlisted candidates complete a short, self-recorded video interview.

4. Agency interviews

Selected candidates may be invited to meet host agencies online or in person (Auckland or Wellington).

5. Reference Checks and Offers

Preferred candidates are notified. Reference and vetting checks are completed before offers are confirmed.

We will keep candidates informed at each stage and let them know the outcome once decisions are made. Please note that whilst we will strive to match you with your preferred choices, you may be invited to apply for another agency placement if your selections are unavailable.

Support and Accessibility

We welcome different ways of applying and can provide support throughout the recruitment process. If you need reasonable accommodations or would like to discuss alternative application options, please contact the **GHSL team**.

Relocation expenses

Unfortunately, due to budget constraints we are unable to offer any travel or relocation expenses in relation to this programme. However, we can provide tips and guidance from our previous interns on what to expect if you do find yourself relocating to another city for the internship programme.

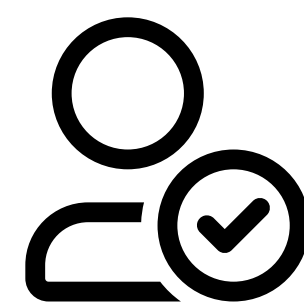


How to apply - Quick Guide

Step 1: Check you are eligible

You need to:

- Be studying in New Zealand and in your penultimate or final year
- Be available full-time from mid-November to mid-February
- Be legally able to study and work in New Zealand



Step 2: Prepare your application

You'll need:

- CV
- Cover letter
- Copy of your unofficial academic transcript (as proof of study)

Your cover letter should explain:

- What you're studying and what interests you
- Why you want to join the programme
- What you'd like to learn or gain from the internship
- What agencies you're particularly interested in and why the work appeals to you.



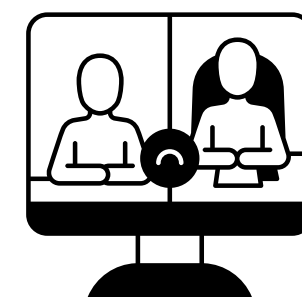
Step 3: Apply online

- Applications open: 10 August 2026
- Applications close: 18 August 2026 (midnight)



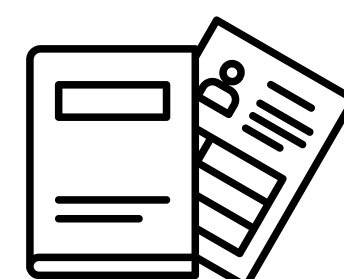
Step 4: Interviews

- Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a short video interview.
- Candidates who are successful will be asked to meet the host agencies and attend an interview either online or in-person



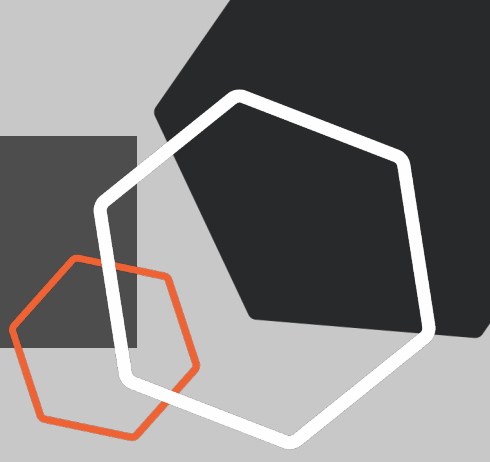
Step 5: References and Offers

- Preferred candidates are contacted
- Reference and vetting checks will be completed by our agencies before any offers are made



Need support?

We welcome different ways of applying and can provide support throughout the process. Email us at gghsl@mpi.govt.nz or have a kōrero/chat about what works best for you.



Internships on offer 1 x Wellington and 1 x Auckland

Government Health and Safety Lead (GHSL) – Wellington

Number of placements: One

Location: Wellington Central (Pastoral House)

Access: Accessible by public transport

- Primarily office-based
- Provided with full-time, fixed-term role over the summer internship period
- Officer hours are generally Monday to Friday generally 8.30am - 5 pm
- <https://www.healthandsafety.govt.nz/>

Customs New Zealand - Auckland

Number of placements: One

Location: Auckland

Access: Accessible by public transport

- Office and Hybrid options
- Provided with full-time, fixed-term role over the summer internship period
- Officer hours are generally Monday to Friday generally 8.30am - 5 pm
- <https://www.customs.govt.nz/>