

Working together to solve a workplace issue

International students have the same workplace rights as all workers in Australia. If you are having issues at work the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) is here to give you free help. Importantly, you can seek the FWO's assistance without fear of your visa being cancelled.

Read Sandeep's story to find out how the FWO can help you solve a workplace issue through mediation.



Sandeep is an international student who worked as a part-time cleaner. After working with his employer, Mary, for four months, he resigned because he found a new job closer to home. Sandeep gave Mary one week's notice, but when he left the job Mary wouldn't pay out the annual leave he had accrued during his time working for her.

When Sandeep asked Mary about this she told him he was not getting any money because he had worked for less than a year and he hadn't returned the company keys.

Sandeep knew this wasn't right or fair so he lodged a request for assistance through My Account on the Fair Work Ombudsman's website. The Fair Work Ombudsman suggested that mediation would be the best way to try to resolve this matter.

Mediation offered by the Fair Work Ombudsman is a voluntary and confidential process that helps employees and employers resolve workplace disputes. It is conducted over the phone by a FWO mediator. Many requests for assistance received by the FWO are sorted out this way.

Mary was also contacted by the FWO and encouraged to take part in the mediation. Sandeep and Mary made an appointment at an agreed time using the Fair Work Ombudsman's online booking system. Before the date of the mediation, Sandeep and Mary got help and information from the FWO to make sure they were prepared.

The mediation call went for 60 minutes and the matter was resolved by Sandeep and Mary discussing the issues, with the help of the mediator. Sandeep and Mary then entered into a written agreement about Sandeep's annual leave pay and the keys.

Sandeep and Mary were satisfied with the outcome and found the process straightforward. They were both happy that it did not take much time or cost any money.

Editor's notes: This is based on a true story.

The FWO helps international students like Sandeep every day.

Visit www.fairwork.gov.au/internationalstudents, call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 or call 13 14 50 for the Translating and Interpreting Service.

The FWO recently updated our website www.fairwork.gov.au to include a web translator that allows you to translate our entire website into 40 languages other than English.

You can also tell us about a workplace issue anonymously in English or in one of 16 other languages.