Hiring the right staff types

Employee, contractor or intern? Our visual guide gives an overview of staff types so you can choose the right kind of help for your business — and then test yourself on staff types with our quiz.

Deciding you’re going to get help is one thing, but getting the best type for you is another. Before you rush out to hire someone, you first need to consider things like:

- how much work actually needs doing
- when work needs to be done by
- the difference between an employee and a contractor
- what level of responsibility you’re willing to take on
- what the rules are around different staff types.

Use our visual guide to:

- gain an overview of the different types of help available
- decide what kind of help might suit you best.

You can also use it to swot up for the quiz on this page.

Once you’re done, use the Employee Cost Calculator to get an estimate of what hiring that employee might cost.

Click “View” to see the full visual guide, or see the text version below it.

Guide to staff types

-Permanent employee

I can help you with:

- full or part-time work that always needs doing
- work that’s ongoing and expected to continue indefinitely
- building a work culture that is committed to your business
- moving into future leadership roles.
My employment agreement must:
- formalise my wages and conditions.

Remember, you’re hiring me on a permanent basis. This means you’ve enough work for me to do. You should also think about how you can grow my skills to improve your business.

Use our Employment Agreement Builder (external link) (https://eab.business.govt.nz/employmentagreementbuilder/startscreen/) to create contracts tailored to your business.

**Fixed-term employee**

I can help you with:
- working for a specific period of time, eg seasonal work
- completing a big project that needs doing
- covering the workload of other employees that might be away, eg parental leave.

My employment agreement must:
- clearly state beginning and end dates, and why I have to be on a fixed-term agreement.

Remember, you’re hiring for a fixed term. If you need me for longer you have to give me a new agreement that explains why it’s still only for a fixed term – or you could offer me a permanent role. Also remember that apprentices and paid interns might be fixed-term employees.

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**Casual employee**

I can help you with:
- those times when you might need an extra set of hands
- showing up when I’m needed
- fitting in to your schedule.

My employment agreement must:
- clearly state the uncertain hours and casual nature of the work.

Remember, I do not have to accept any offer of work given, as I may have other work that I’m doing at that time. Even though I only work when you need me to, I’m still entitled to paid leave. And, if the work I’m doing becomes more regular you need to think about taking me on as a permanent employee.

Use our Employment Agreement Builder (external link) (https://eab.business.govt.nz/employmentagreementbuilder/startscreen/) to create contracts tailored to your business.

**Contractor**

I’m not classed as an employee. I can help you with:
- my special skills or knowledge
- working for a limited time
- bringing my own tools and equipment with me.

You should give me:
- a contract service agreement
- an agreed time frame to complete the work.

Remember, because I’m a contractor I get to decide how to do my job by the deadline. So, unless we’ve agreed differently, this means that I might work from home and whatever hours might suit me best. I also sort out my own obligations with Inland Revenue and ACC so you don’t have to, unless I earn scheduler payments as listed in
Unpaid intern or volunteer

I'm not classed as an employee. I can help you with:

- freeing up your time
- doing one-off jobs
- charity work or anything that might give me new experiences or skills.

I should have from you:

- any training that is required to do the task
- a record of when I worked for you
- a written agreement that explains this is an unpaid internship/volunteer position only, what the nature of my work is, and how long we’ve agreed it should last.

Remember, you need to keep me safe and so should give me any health and safety training or equipment that I might need. Note that Inland Revenue could see koha or gratuity that you give me as payment. If you find that you are regularly giving gratuity or paying me then you may want to think about making me into an employee.

Quiz

Quiz: Staff types

Permanent, fixed-term, casual employ or contractor — test yourself on the differences. When you're done, follow the links in the answers for more details.

All paid employees need

- Any equipment needed to do their job, like a computer.
- A signed employment agreement specific to their role and employee type (includes things like hours of work, location of work, description of work, and salary) — use our Employment Agreement Builder to create contracts tailored to your business.
- A tax code declaration (IR330).
- Relevant KiwiSaver forms (for New Zealand residents or those on a long-term visa).
- Health and safety training and equipment.

Remember, you also need to:

- Register as an employer with Inland Revenue.
- Deduct PAYE from their salary/wages, which you record in your Employer monthly schedule (IR348) and Employer deductions form (IR345).
- Pay annual ACC levies.

Complete my tax code declaration(external link) — Inland Revenue
How to attract great summer staff

If you’re in tourism, retail, hospitality or horticulture, you’ll probably need extra help during the busy months.

Read all about it!

Quiz: Employment 101

Test yourself on hiring and managing employees. Then follow links from the answers to find out more.

Employment law changes

Learn about new rules on zero-hour contracts, cancelled shifts, minimum wages and parental leave.

Hiring an employee
We've parcelled up our best tools, tips and visual guides to help you hire with confidence — all in one place.