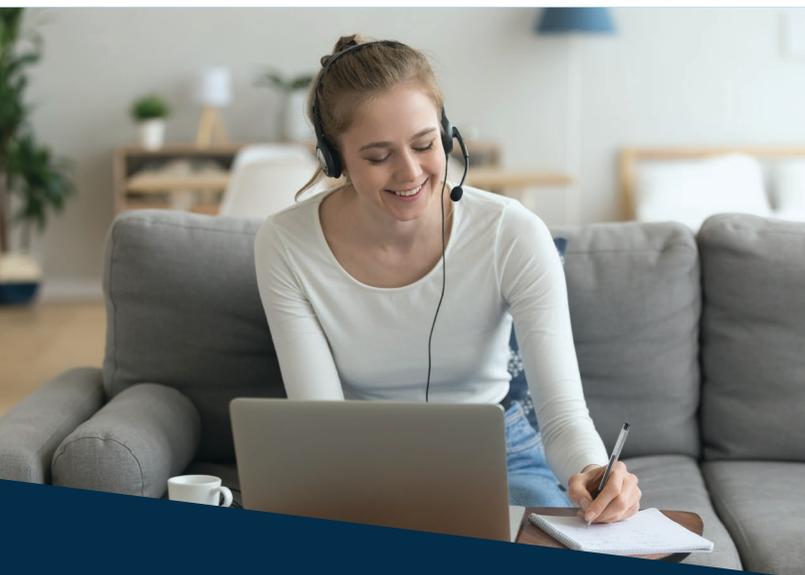


BEST PRACTICES

FOR HOSTING REMOTE AND VIRTUAL INTERNSHIPS

In the wake of COVID-19, organizations are quickly changing how they get work done, which includes managing interns. While it is difficult to predict what will happen, organizations do need to start making decisions now in order to plan for successful onboarding, training, and impactful work.

To help you think through this process, we have gathered best practices for structuring virtual internships. Using these strategies will help set your organization up for an effective virtual internship experience that benefits your organization and the student interns.



01 ASSESS YOUR CAPABILITIES

- ▶ Provide necessary equipment to host internships, such as virtual meeting platform, software access for interns, and access to necessary files or resources to complete assignments.
- ▶ Identify who will be supervising, training, mentoring and providing the intern timely feedback.

02 ONBOARDING

- ▶ Host a virtual orientation that introduces interns to your organization mission, goals, and values. Having an understanding of the overall organization will help interns see where they fit and how their work is contributing to the bigger picture.
- ▶ Set an agreed upon schedule with the intern. Unpaid internships range from 6 – 10 hours a week and up to 20 hours a week for paid internships. Supervisors and interns should agree upon a definitive time allotment per week, per day, and per internship activity.
- ▶ E-Introduce interns to the team. Set up a group meeting for the intern to meet other interns, or staff that they will be working with throughout the internship.
- ▶ [Create a Virtual Onboarding Program](#)

03 LEARNING GOALS & WORK PLANS

- ▶ Collaborate with the intern to develop 3 – 5 learning goals for the internship.
- ▶ [Learning Goals and Objectives](#) include skills, knowledge, and attitude/values goals.
- ▶ [Identify Projects, Tasks, and Learning Outcomes \(Video\)](#)

04 TRAINING

- ▶ Training should be conducted at the beginning of an internship. This can cover your expectations, communication practices, and an introduction to projects and assignments.
- ▶ Provide training on how to utilize any software and how to access information they need to complete their work.
- ▶ Anytime a new task or assignment is introduced, conduct a training session to make sure interns understand the project and their role. Providing this context can help them better understand what they are doing and how it contributes to the organization.
- ▶ Schedule a time for interns to also ask questions.

05 COMMUNICATION

- ▶ At the beginning of the internship, communication will happen more often. You will probably want to touch base via video conference with your intern at least two to three times a week during the first few weeks.
- ▶ Once the intern, and you, are comfortable with the arrangement, video check-ins can be done on a weekly basis to follow up on current assignments.
- ▶ Timely feedback is important; review intern deliverables and provide timely feedback to students on a regular basis.

06 SUPERVISION & MENTORING

- ▶ Utilize the intern's learning goals to assess student's progress.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for the student to ask questions.
- ▶ Create a virtual mentoring program for students to network and learn from other members of your team.
- ▶ [Coach and Mentor Interns When Working Remotely \(Video\)](#)

07 PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS

- ▶ Utilize your organization's project management tools to keep track of students' assignments
- ▶ Explore online resources such as this [Free Software List](#)

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

Students engaged in virtual internships should not incur any personal expenses. Any costs, including the purchase of software and hardware for the purposes of the internship, should be covered by the internship host site, or alternative arrangements provided to the student prior to starting the internship.

EXPECTATIONS

This may be the first time your intern has worked in an independent work environment which necessitates high levels of self-motivation and personal organizational skills. The more support and tools you equip them with in this new environment, the faster they will adapt.



HOW TO GET STARTED

Contact university staff and faculty to talk about your organizations' needs and constraints. Faculty and staff can help you convert your face-to-face internships into virtual internships.

HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS

- ▶ [What to do About Internships in Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic?](#)
- ▶ [8 Tips to Developing a Successful Virtual Internship Program](#)
- ▶ [Best Practices for Creating a Successful Virtual Internship](#)
- ▶ [Virtual Internships: A Guide for Employers](#)
- ▶ [Remote Internships 101](#)
- ▶ [CLA Internship Program](#)

CONTACT

Contact the CLA Internship Specialist to strategize best practices and begin offering virtual internships.

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