

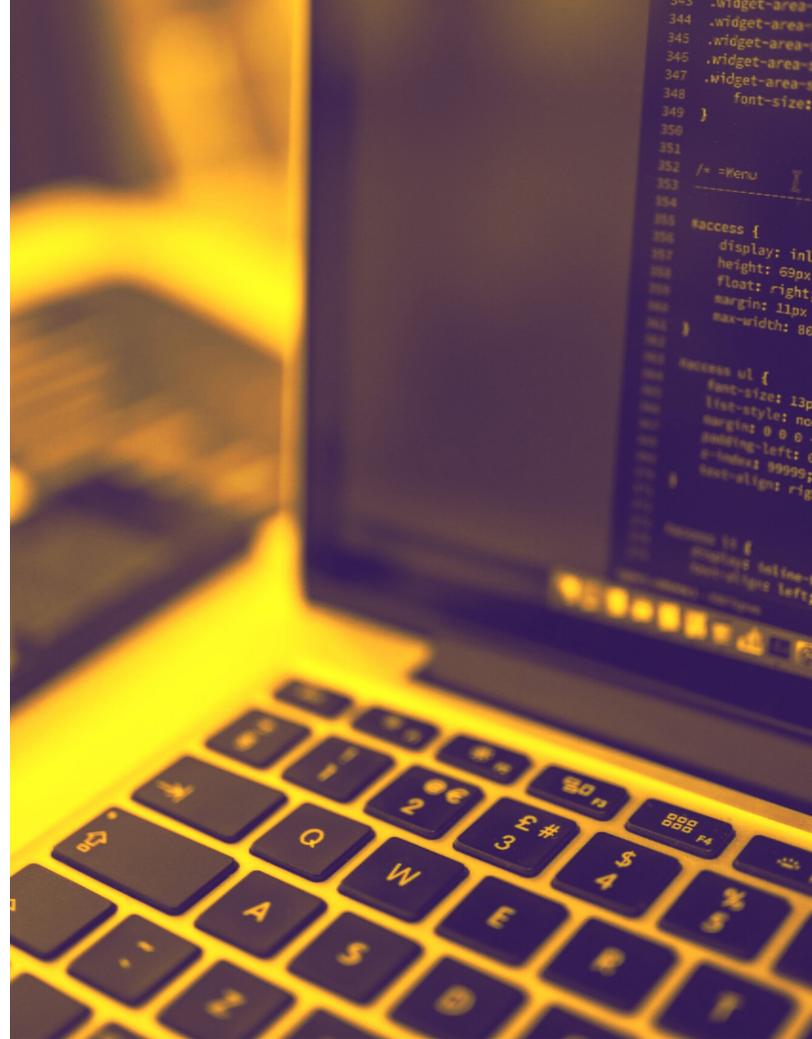
Virtual Internships

Best Practices for Students

By removing the limitations of geography and space, remote or virtual internships can open up possibilities to work in roles or with companies that you may not otherwise have access to.

But when participating in a virtual internship, there are a few keys to being successful.

Here is a list of the best practices to ensure you make the most of the experience.



First Things First, Technology:

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- **Though your employer will be responsible to provide you with access to any software or technology necessary to accomplish your assignments, you will still need to ensure you have a reliable connection to the internet and access to a device (e.g. a desktop or laptop) appropriate for completing your work.**
- **Tip: Many local businesses offer free Wifi. You may also be able to find free internet access, as well as access to public computers, at your local public library.**

Expectations & Intentionality

As with any experience, you will want to ensure expectations are clear – both those your employer has of you and those that you have for the experience – and be intentional in meeting these expectations and making the most of your experience. To help with this:

- Be sure you are attentive during any virtual training or orientation sessions and that you read all necessary training documents for your role. If no such trainings or documents are provided, ask your employer for a scheduled meeting to discuss the goals, mission, and vision of the company and how your role will help them accomplish these.
- Know your responsibilities, what resources are needed to complete your work, what success will look like from your employer's perspective once completed, and a tentative week-by-week timeline you should follow.
- Determine 3 – 5 goals for the internship experience, e.g. what skills and competencies you hope to gain or develop. Where possible, take advantage of any training and resources provided by your employer that support the achievement of these goals.
- Meet with your supervisor regularly and ask for constructive feedback that is specific to your responsibilities and your stated goals for the experience.
- If possible, take part in virtual mentoring programs or professional development events offered by your employer.

Establish a Schedule:

When you remove the physical proximity from your experience, you can no longer spontaneously drop in to seek instant clarity regarding your responsibilities or depend on a physical space or an in-person supervisor to help hold you accountable to stay on task. Consequently, it will be important for you to:

- Set an agreed upon schedule keeping in mind that unpaid internships range from 6 – 10 hours a week and paid internships up to 20 hours a week. Supervisors and interns should agree upon a definitive time allotment per week, per day, and per internship activity.
- Schedule a 30-60 minute check-in every week to help ensure you don't lose focus and subsequently let your responsibilities go astray. Clear project scope will help alleviate frustration on both sides and keep everyone on track.
- Use your calendar to dedicate time on a daily or weekly basis to complete your responsibilities, giving yourself deadlines and progress goals as needed.



In light of the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Many employers have had to consider offering virtual internships as a safe alternative to their previously in-person experiences.

During such a time of disruption and uncertainty, **it is natural to have questions about what is next and how your internship will be impacted.** These questions are often shared by your employer, as they may be new to navigating such transitions and providing a quality virtual internship experience.

As a result, it will be important to **remain patient, flexible, and assume positive intent.** Current circumstances could delay communications at times, but it doesn't mean your employer isn't concerned with getting you the answers to your questions. They just may not have them yet.