



Virtual Internship Guidelines

As adapted from University of Portland Career Center, Virtual Internship Guidelines & California State Fullerton, Proposed Remote/Virtual Internship Guidelines

Virtual or Project-Based Internships

As employers are exploring options for bringing interns into the workplace, virtual project-based internships are a viable alternative. Communication between the employer and their intern(s) takes place through a variety of methods such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, telephone and email. These virtual projects typically range from 5 – 40 hours or in some cases up to 6 months.

The following guideline is meant to assist an employer when developing the project-based or virtual internship experience.

1. Defined Learning Goals & Expectations.

- a. Employer & Student identify 4-6 desired learning goals to be completed during the course of the internship. (e.g. industry-related knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful career advancement)
- b. Employer shares project and the weekly goals and tasks necessary to accomplish.
- c. Employer provides resources the student can research or contact to assist with weekly completions.
- d. Document the employer and students defined learning goals to use during weekly check-ins

2. Thorough Onboarding & Orientation.

- a. Host virtual onboarding meeting with other team and staff members:
 - share organization information, culture and org chart
 - review organization-wide communication standards
 - share workplace expectations
 - provide and explain required training, along with how-to guides to accomplish
 - allow the student to share defined learning goals with the team- allows team to engage with student and understand why learning goals are important to the student
 - engage the intern during the onboarding experience; allowing the intern a chance to connect and ask clarifying questions- may be first professional work environment and first virtually-based position

3. Organizational Involvement & Connection.

- a. Supervisor should integrate the intern into the organization's work culture. After initial onboarding orientation, this may include attendance at select team meetings, use of company tools and resources, and any other forms of access to other staff members.

4. Timely Feedback & Consistent Communication.

- a. Supervisors should schedule Weekly Feedback Meetings for a minimum of 30 minutes each week to engage in direct mentorship with the student regarding their progress towards assigned project tasks, areas of desired learning goals and professional development: video conference
- b. Summative feedback should be provided consistently at least once a week, prior to Weekly Feedback meeting: update on expected work activities for the week, outcomes from prior work submissions, and other relevant announcements pertaining to the organization. This could be done as an email report assigned to the same day each week and used as discussion point during Weekly Feedback meetings.
- c. Supervisors should review intern deliverables and provide timely feedback to students on a regular basis or as needed: email, phone, or video.

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5. Pre-arranged Schedules-know the assigned work.

- a. Supervisor should define with the student agreed upon hours per week and per day for internship activities.
- b. Shift Work caps – define the amount of accrued time allotted for any given task – is strongly recommended to avoid unreasonable work demands on the student and any conflict with reported internship hours. If a defined work schedule and/or shift cap is not established, disputes may result as to how long tasks took the student to perform. Weekly Feedback meetings

6. Expenses.

- a. Students engaged in virtual internships should not incur any personal expenses as a result of the internship “remote” status. Any such 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. This may be negotiable depending upon the employer/student arrangement.

Additional notes for employers

Student interns benefit from tasks being contextualized...rather than just assigning “to do” deliverables.

1. Communicate why the work is important.
2. What is the task or project contributing towards or connected to?
3. How will this task contribute to the greater good of the project/department/organization?

Employer Guideline Summary:

1. **Orient the student** to the company and key contacts
2. **Identify student learning goals**
3. **Outline employer project goals** – goal importance to the department and weekly expectations for accomplishment
4. **Schedule weekly meetings:** work status update (should be documented), check-ins, department meetings: video conference, email, and phone
5. **Over communicate and involve** – not only work-related projects and tasks, but also creative interaction amongst other interns and staff (virtual scavenger hunt; virtual homerooms - connect and get to know others)
6. **Provide necessary equipment** for the intern to accomplish assigned project

Resources for delivering a virtual internship experience:

- Face to Face Communication – GoToMeeting, Zoom, FaceTime, WebEx, Zoho Meetings, etc.
- Other communication tools – Slack, Email, Instant Messenger, etc.
- Free Project Management Tools – Asana, OpenProject, nTask, Monday, etc.
- Online file sharing – DropBox, Box, GoFile, etc

For more information, please contact your campus career staff.

For a listing of contacts, visit www.ivytech.edu/careerdevelopment.

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