



EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO VIRTUAL INTERNSHIP SUCCESS

Set expectations:

Have a clear plan about the format of the internship, what tools the intern is going to need, and how often they're expected to communicate with their supervisor and team. Keep in mind that some interns have little to no professional experience outside of school and may require guidance through mentorship.

Provide tools:

Prepare in advance what technology and software is needed to manage a remote team, including a video conferencing platform, a messaging app, and document sharing. Make sure to offer technical support even delegating an IT point of contact to help them, especially during onboarding. Ideally, the employer should loan the equipment to the student if they don't have it or perhaps provide a stipend for them to purchase what they need to do their best work.

Provide training:

Prior to the intern's first day, provide onboarding materials such as HR paperwork and allow interns to get acquainted with your company and culture. Sending swag is one way to bring the company culture to life. Set up learning goals and expectations such as schedules, meetings and projects. Inform interns about how they can engage with your employee resource groups.

Prepare supervisors:

New supervisors should be provided with training on managing interns and on virtual engagement best practices. Take time to consider alternate work, reach out to other departments and assess current needs to provide the intern with a rich remote experience. Be flexible and creative in order to maximize an intern's functionality. Keep in contact with your intern's internship director to discuss work requirements and any challenges that may arise.

Connect interns:

In addition to their managers, "onboarding buddies" can help answer any questions interns might have and may feel uncomfortable addressing with others, while welcoming them into your organization.

First day:

Provide onboarding orientation which should consist of meeting other staff members, reviewing organization-wide communication standards, and workplace expectations. Review the student's goals and provide the intern with the chance to ask clarifying questions. Set up lunch breaks and a system for tracking hours.

Communicate:

Set up weekly online video meetings to discuss progress on work, answer questions, provide feedback, and find out how the student is fairing. It's important to remember that the kinds of nuanced communication you get in an office setting don't necessarily translate online. Consider when and how you communicate. When do we use chats? Why do we write emails? At what point do we pick up the phone?

For more information:

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