



Best Practices for a Virtual Internship

When you are working virtually, take advantage of these best practices to be successful in your role. These recommendations include planning for success, best communication practices, and performance considerations.

Planning

1. **Have an initial conversation on goals, timing, and communication.** Use this conversation to understand the work.
 - a. Will it be one large project that you independently drive, or will you receive assignments throughout the timeframe?
 - b. What is the expected timeframe for completion?
 - c. Will there be any “pop-up” requests that you need to be alert for?
 - d. What is your supervisor’s preference for communication format and frequency?
 - e. What format should your work product take? Email, attachment, phone call, etc.
2. **Set up a weekly check-in with your supervisor.** Communicate with your internship supervisor to arrange a specific day each week when you will call, email, Skype, or text each other. This check-in should include:
 - a. A discussion of the assignments that you have turned in most recently
 - b. Your work performance overall and upcoming assignments
 - c. Goals that both you and your supervisor have for the remainder of the internship
 - d. Be a self-starter. If you have finished your assignments, do not wait for work to flow to you; ask your supervisor what else you could do.
3. **Keep track of the assignments that you complete, the documents that you create, and the skills that you learn.** Over the course of one internship, you will probably create or edit a few documents, complete assignments of different kinds, and learn new skills.
 - a. These assignments, documents, and skills will come in handy when you apply for future internships and jobs.
 - b. Remember what you did and keep physical records whenever you can.
4. **If the role is part time, set aside specific days and times each week to work on tasks for your internship.** Many remote-work internships naturally have less structure than in-person internships, because you do not need to go to a physical office on certain days every week.
 - a. You should create a structure for yourself. Otherwise, you may risk forgetting or procrastinating on certain assignments.
 - b. You could connect with fellow remote-work interns in many different places and ways.
 - c. Be sure to monitor your email for correspondence from your supervisor. Unless you have agreed upon days and times that you will be working, you’ll need to be attentive and responsive to emails throughout the week.

Communication

5. **Practice overcommunication.** When you don't have the benefit of physical proximity, it can be hard to feel connected to your manager during an internship. Chat with your manager about how best they'd like updates about your work, and make sure to follow through via those channels.
 - a. If they prefer emails consider sending a weekly email recap about lessons you've learned, projects you've made progress on, and any questions that might have arisen during the week.
 - b. If they prefer face-to-face meetings, come to your video check-ins prepared with notes, questions, and ideas. Monitor your email and respond quickly to emails from your supervisor. And be sure to look into the camera while speaking.

6. **Be professional in your email communication.** Particularly if email will be one of the primary ways in which you communicate with your supervisor, you want to be sure that the email paints you in the best light.
 - a. Emails should begin with a greeting (not "Hey"), include full sentences, appropriate spelling and punctuation. Always begin with Mr. or Ms. unless they tell you otherwise.
 - b. Avoid the use of an informal "texting tone" and style, such as using abbreviations (BTW, IRL, etc.).
 - c. Avoid long emails. If the issue is complex, you can pick up the phone or request a time to talk.

Performance

7. **Look for ways to benefit the organization and yourself by completing additional tasks.**
 - a. Think about what your internship organization does, how that relates to what you do and your interests and see how you could combine them.
 - b. Keep an eye out for possible side projects that you could take on to this end.

8. **Be flexible.** The internship position may change over time. Conditions and the priorities of the organization and the people involved change. Your supervisor may need to postpone the check-in call one week for example
 - a. Communicate regularly and make sure that you fully understand each assignment and what goal it helps the organization achieve.
 - b. This will help you adapt to modified assignment parameters or deadlines.
 - c. Be sure to have fun!