VIRTUAL INTERNSHIP GUIDE
for Students

How to Make the Most of Your Remote / Virtual Internship

1. **Schedule your time.** The ability to work independently is vital to a virtual internship. Your Site Supervisor/Manager and colleagues need to know when you'll be working. Set a schedule for your intern hours and make sure to communicate that plan to everyone who needs the information. Then stick to it. Creating a schedule for yourself and sticking to it will keep the work manageable and help you avoid a last-minute crunch right before a deadline. Make sure you devote the required time necessary to complete projects by the deadline your supervisor established.

2. **Avoid distractions.** Set up a workspace that will allow you to be efficient. Turn off the television and set aside social media. Make sure you can focus during your work hours.

3. **Be professional.** You'll be tempted to work from bed in your pajamas at times, but you'll be more productive if you get up and dress as if you were going to an office. This will also come in handy when you are asked to participate in an unexpected videoconference. When talking on the phone or participating in a conference call, make sure to choose a location that is noise free and allows you to focus all of your attention on the task at hand.

   Much of the communication during your virtual internship will be through email. Keep your writing professional and appropriate for the workplace. Your Site Supervisor will appreciate messages that are clearly written and to the point.

4. **Communicate.** Communication between you and your Site Supervisor is imperative in a virtual internship. You're trying to make a good impression, so make sure your Site Supervisor and colleagues know what you're doing. Find out when and how they prefer to hear from you, and always keep them in the loop. When you receive a message from your boss, respond as quickly as possible.

   Pro Tip: Consider setting up a meeting at the same time each week so that you can monitor your progress, discuss on-going tasks, and keep your Site Supervisor up to date. There are a variety of ways to stay in touch with your Site Supervisor. Make sure you have the proper tools for successful virtual communication. A microphone / headset combination will alleviate background noise and improve the clarity of your conversations.

5. **Use a task list.** Write down what you need to accomplish before you start working for the day, then refer back to your list often as you get things done. Balance out your tasks and don't try to do everything at once. Be patient, thorough, and take advantage of the flexibility of working from home. Plus, it will help you feel accomplished as you cross completed items off your list! Consider using an organizational tool such as Google Calendar or Evernote to help you stay on top of things.

6. **Ask questions.** If you're confused about an assignment or unsure what to do next, don't be afraid to ask your Site Supervisor / Manager or colleagues for help. There are no stupid questions! Clarifying your tasks now will help you be successful in completing them.

7. **Take breaks.** If you've never worked remotely, you may find yourself getting sucked into a project and working for long stretches without a break. That's OK occasionally, but you'll likely be more effective if you rest and recharge every hour or two. Schedule a few break times, and don't ignore them. Be sure to eat throughout the day as well.

8. **Consider a change of scenery.** You may also find that sitting in the same room of your home all day is making you a bit stir crazy. If so, pack up your stuff and head to a coffee shop, library, or other location that offers a good work environment (after social distancing is over!). Right now, a change of scenery can mean outside to sit in your garden or patio or moving from your bedroom to your couch.

9. **Go the extra mile.** Don't be afraid to pitch new ideas to your employer and work collaboratively with the rest of the team. Surpass expectations and look for unique ways to do more than just the required work. For example, if you notice the company could benefit by using another social media platform, mention it to your Site Supervisor and suggest an action plan.

10. **Know your resources.** CSUCI has many resources for you while you navigate working remotely. Be sure to check in with the Career Studio, (805) 437-3270 or career.services@csuci.edu, if you have any questions about your remote / virtual internship. Or check in with your major chair or academic adviser.

If you follow these guidelines, you will maximize your productivity during your internship and showcase your skills. That could be the key to landing your first full-time job or stepping into a new career, so it's definitely worth the effort.

Resources for Your Remote / Virtual Internship

Virtual Communication Tools

Resources for delivering a virtual internship experience:
- Face to Face Communication – GoToMeeting, Zoom, FaceTime, WebEx, Zoho Meetings, Skype, etc.
- Other communication tools – Slack, Email, Instant Messenger, etc.
- Free Project Management Tools – Asana, OpenProject, nTask, Monday, Smartsheet, etc.
- Online file sharing – DropBox, Box, GoogleDrive, GoFile, etc.

Virtual Networking

Use this opportunity to network with not only your site supervisor but also other interns and employees at your internship. Creating a profile on a site like LinkedIn will help you establish an online professional network so that the relationships you develop during your internship last long after the semester is over.

Additionally, CSUCI has its own networking platform – Dolphin Connect – to assist you in connecting with other Dolphins (alumni). Dolphin Connect is connecting the Dolphin Network through mentoring and purposeful connections. By joining Dolphin Connect, you will be able to network with Dolphins in your industry, share career advice or gain insights from experienced professionals, and access career development resources. Read more about how to create a LinkedIn account on the Career Development Page and more tips about networking on Dolphin Connect.

Additional Resources:
- Career Development @CSUCI – Student Resource page
- 6 Ways to Rock a Remote Internship
- Virtual Internships – Career Balance