Virtual Internships
A Guide for Current Students

Finding an internship can be difficult, but finding a virtual internship can bring many new challenges. Once you secure a virtual internship, new challenges lie ahead, such as building community or learning how to network within your organization without setting foot in the office. The Glenn College has compiled some tips and tricks to help ease your internship search and transition in a virtual career world.
1) How to find virtual internships

a. Job boards
   i. As you begin your job search, make sure you are taking advantage of resources like LinkedIn, Handshake, and Indeed. Handshake will allow you to filter for remote positions.
   ii. Parker Dewey offers micro-internships to students—check those out here. Micro-internships are short-term internships, usually project based, that allow students to gain transferable skills.
   iii. LinkedIn offers a great job board based on your experiences, so make sure your LinkedIn is updated with all of your recent information.
   iv. Handshake is free for all Ohio State students and alumni (handshake.osu.edu).
   v. If you plan to apply for federal positions, you will likely need to apply through USAJobs. Check out our website under “Workshops” as well as gogovernment.org if you are looking for federal positions.
   vi. Alumnifire is also a great networking tool for Ohio State students and alumni.

b. Networking and informational interviews
   “I am really interested in the work you do. Would you be willing to talk more in person over coffee or over the phone?” is a great way to start the conversation with a new contact.
   i. Use LinkedIn to research people and organizations to reach out to. It is perfectly professional to message someone via LinkedIn about an informational interview.
   ii. An informational interview is not a time to bring your resume and ask for a job—it’s to get your foot in the door and get to know someone who can offer great and relevant advice.

Oftentimes, the person you’re meeting with will ask you to send them your resume after your meeting, but don’t do it preemptively. Remember: you must build a relationship before asking for favors. You should also genuinely seek to learn more about the organization and what opportunities exist.

2) Develop a strong communication plan

a. In a virtual internship, it is challenging to learn the ways of an organization. That being said, it’s still important for you to communicate and ask questions. Develop a strong communication plan. You should ask your supervisor the following questions upon start:
   i. How often will we touch base? Will we have a daily touch point, and if so, what time? Will we have a more detailed weekly check-in? Can I add those to your calendar?
   ii. What communication tools do you prefer?
   iii. If I am stuck between touchpoints, how do you prefer I reach out?
   iv. Are there meetings that you suggest I join?
   v. Would it help if I sent you an email at the end of each day summarizing what I worked on, and the progress I made on my projects?
   vi. How will I be aware of timelines and how often should I update you on progress?
   vii. Are there any important onboarding documents, or web content relevant to the work we do that I should read up on to provide further context?
   viii. Who else on the team should I meet? What is their role and how can I help them? Can you set up these meetings, or how should I reach out?

b. Be sure expectations are clear: ask at the beginning what is expected of you and what success will look like. You will likely need to work even harder to understand this in a virtual environment, but do not be afraid to ask clarifying questions.

c. While the style of communication differs while you’re virtual (you can't just stop by your supervisor’s office), it’s important to maintain regular communication with your team. Asking the above questions and clarifying expectations around communication and establishing the workplace culture of communication early will set you up for success.

3) Professionalism in a virtual setting as an intern

a. Dress code
   i. Make sure you are wearing business casual or professional based on your company’s typical dress, especially during your onboarding process.
   ii. Be sure to communicate with human resources or your supervisor to discuss what you should be wearing during virtual calls with colleagues.
b. Video conferencing tips and tricks
   i. Be sure you are muted unless you are speaking.
   ii. Be mindful of distractions in the background: think about what your colleagues can see.
   iii. If you use a green screen, be sure that it is appropriate.
   iv. If possible, use earphones with a microphone or a headset to ensure you can be clearly heard.

c. Set up an office space to conduct your internship work
   i. This is important! Find a space in your home to conduct your work and virtual meetings that will take place throughout your internship.
   ii. Having a designated space, if possible, allows you to be productive throughout the day even while working remotely.

4) Receiving virtual feedback
   a. Your company should have a formal review process where you have the opportunity to receive feedback and provide feedback.
      i. If you decide to take PA 4191.01, you will be provided with a formal evaluation by your instructor to take place between you and your supervisor for a grade.
   b. Be sure to have a weekly or bi-weekly meeting with your supervisor to chat about your progress, questions, and any feedback. This should be clarified during your initial onboarding meeting. Offer to put this meeting on both you and your supervisor’s calendar, and develop an agenda template if appropriate. This will help you (and your supervisor!) stay organized.
   c. Be sure to ask for feedback during your check-ins with your supervisor. Don’t be afraid to ask for feedback, either. It’s an important part of the professional development process.
   d. Track your performance
      i. Keep a record of your accomplishments and accolades to provide to your supervisor during the evaluation process.

5) Building community
   a. Attend virtual events within the company if they are offered to build community in a virtual setting (ex. Virtual happy hours, dinners, etc.). Don’t be afraid to ask if there are any team meetings or activities you can join.
   b. Make sure that you are building your network while you are working for the organization or company through virtual informational interviews with colleagues. Ask your supervisor who they recommend you meet with in the organization based on your goals and interests, and then ask if they would be willing to set-up virtual coffee meetings with them. Come to those meetings prepared like you would in person: research the person’s background and think of a few questions you want to ask. Remember: it’s a conversation!
   c. While you might not be able to go to lunch with your supervisor or colleagues, it’s important to find other opportunities to connect with your team, including your supervisor.
   d. Don’t be afraid to ask your supervisor if you can join meetings that are of interest to you: they may not have thought of it until you ask.
   e. Are there other interns? Ask your supervisor or human resources lead if it would be appropriate to arrange an intern happy hour, lunch, or trivia night. Perhaps you could ask your supervisor or human resources lead to set up a brown bag with the organization’s leadership.
   f. Ask your supervisor if you can be assigned a mentor in the organization. This person would not supervise your day to day work, but would be an added layer of support: someone you can connect with weekly to check-in, ask questions and seek mentorship. Plus, it will allow you to get to know someone new in the organization, further building community.

We know things are different right now, but you can still find opportunities for professional development. We encourage you to continue to utilize the Glenn College career services, and continue to pursue internships, even if they look different that you expected. Virtual internships will still allow you to make contact, gain professional skills, and strengthen your resume. Most importantly, you will continue to hone your skills in adaptability!