



VIRTUAL INTERNSHIPS

INTERNSHIPS FOR CREDIT

What is a virtual internship?

- Real-world, work-based learning experience where activities are remote, from a place other than the hosting company. Working and learning happen via computer, email, online chat, and/or phone. Also called remote internship or online internship.
- An industry professional provides supervision remotely instead of in person.

What are advantages of a virtual internship?

- **Save time and money:** Virtual internships allow you to work from home, avoiding the time and expense of commuting.
- **Flexibility:** May allow for a more flexible schedule while permitting work from nearly anywhere.
- **Safety:** Allows for the learning experience while limiting exposure to potential hazards such as contagious illness.
- **Build new skills:** Develop and improve technical, productivity, time management, communication, and technology skills with the support of a site supervisor.
- **Increased productivity:** Distractions and disruptions of a shared work environment may be avoided allowing for better focus and productivity.
- **Additional opportunities:** Grow your professional network beyond local employers.
- **Environmentally friendly:** Use less fuel and other resources (such as paper products to pack your lunch) than when commuting to an internship.

What are challenges of a virtual internship?

- **Potential for less structure and support:** Virtual communication may limit the frequency and extent of the site supervisor's guidance.
- **Less direct supervision:** A virtual internship is more independent, requiring intern to self-manage their time and self-motivate to accomplish tasks.
- **Dependent on technology:** May rely on video conferencing, emails, and virtual meetings which require a good internet connection. Technical glitches can occur and be frustrating.
- **Limited exposure to professional environment:** More challenging to experience a company's culture and learn successful work behaviors such as office etiquette.
- **Lack of in-person relationship building:** Fewer opportunities for building connections and networking with supervisor and co-workers.



How do I create a virtual internship?

- **Be resume-ready:** Update your resume to ensure that it highlights your technical skills as well as those required in the virtual environment, such as technology, communication, problem-solving, and time management.
- **Explore [Sierra Job Link](#):** A free service for Sierra College students and alumni to connect with industry professionals for career opportunities, including internships. Enter “Virtual” for the School Job ID to see virtual opportunities.
- **Investigate other websites:** Check out sites such as [indeed.com](#) and [Placer County Resources for Job Seekers](#), as well as websites for any companies you’re interested in.
- **If an employer offers an in-person internship:** Ask the employer if it is possible to make the opportunity virtual. Be ready to offer suggestions for tasks that offer virtual learning.
- **Contact an employer advertising a virtual job:** It may be possible to turn the job into an internship.
- **Reach out to instructors** in your major for potential virtual internship connections.

How can I be successful in a virtual internship?

- **Be primed:**
 - **Understand expectations:** Be clear about your supervisor’s expectations, including your assigned tasks, training, technology needs, schedule, and timelines.
 - **Set goals:** Consider what you want to learn and accomplish, as well as your supervisor’s expectations, then develop a plan for success.
- **Be prepared:**
 - **Ensure available technology is sufficient for internship tasks:** Confirm that you have access to any required computer devices, software, and internet speeds.
 - **Maintain an effective workspace:** Arrange your workspace to be well-organized, distraction-free, and comfortable.
- **Be proactive:**
 - **Prioritize good communication:** Communicate regularly and respond promptly to your supervisor and colleagues; don’t be afraid to ask for help or additional guidance.
 - **Manage your time well:** Plan and use your time carefully and effectively to meet deadlines.
 - **Request feedback:** Ask your supervisor for feedback about your work and performance.