



VIRTUAL INTERNSHIPS

INTERNSHIP FOR CREDIT

What is a Virtual Internship?

- A real-world, work-based learning experience conducted remotely, using computer, email, online chat, and/or phone. Also known as a remote or online internship.
- Supervision is provided by an industry professional remotely, rather than 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 [College Central Network](#):** 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 Prepared:

- **Understand Expectations:** Clarify your supervisor's expectations, including tasks, training, technology needs, schedule, and timelines.
- **Set Goals:** Define what you want to learn and achieve, then create a plan that aligns with both your goals and your supervisor's expectations.
- **Ensure Technology Readiness:** Confirm access to necessary devices, software, and reliable internet for internship tasks.
- **Create an Effective Workspace:** Set up a well-organized, comfortable, and distraction-free work environment.

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.