

VIRTUAL INTERNSHIP BEST PRACTICES FOR EMPLOYERS

1. Start with thinking what has made a successful in-person internship. How can you incorporate some of these characteristics into a virtual internship? Often, successful interns report feeling like they belong and that the organization cared about them.
2. Schedule a thorough onboarding and orientation.
 - a. Gather all your interns and other employees together to the extent feasible to provide a sense of belonging and team.
 - b. Schedule lunch time trainings or other online events for interns and other team members to get together.
3. Set clearly defined learning goals with your interns. Write them out and schedule check-ins along the way to see if progress is being made.
4. Set clear communication guidelines including preferred method of communication
5. Make sure your intern has an appropriate workspace, internet access, and equipment.
6. Encourage over-communicating at the beginning and keep in mind power dynamics that might exist between supervisor and intern. Examine your own biases, blind spots and the impact that COVID-19 has had on students and certain populations.
7. Set clear expectations regarding hours and expectations for video conferencing. This includes when interns must be available and dress code for virtual meetings.
8. Provide timely feedback both in response to work product as well as scheduling regular check-in meetings either daily or weekly.
9. When assigning tasks, contextualize tasks. Do not just send blank “to do” lists. Rather, communicate why this work matters or how it is connected to the larger work or the case being worked on by the attorney or organization.
 - a. When feasible, assign tasks that impact a larger group so that multiple people in your organization feel invested in the intern’s work and so that the intern can reach out to multiple mentors.
10. To the extent feasible, schedule in-person meetings on a regular schedule taken in accordance with social distancing measures.
11. At the same time, embrace flexibility and if possible, offer your employee assistance program benefits to your intern.