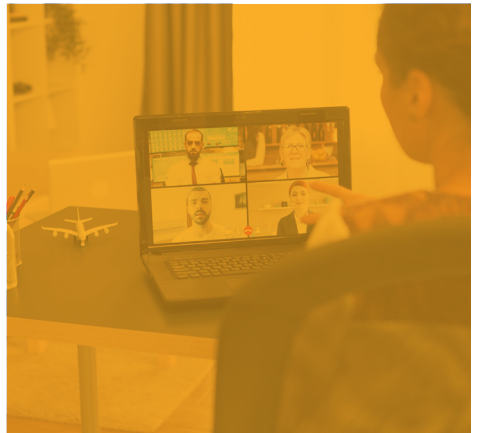
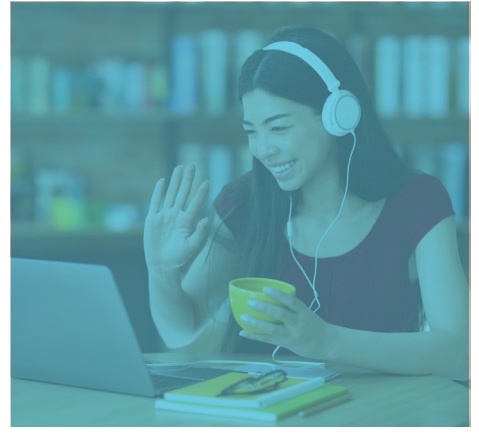


Missouri Intern Connect



VIRTUAL INTERNSHIP TOOL KIT



CONVERTING TO VIRTUAL INTERNSHIPS



The COVID-19 pandemic changed the world in many ways. Many companies and organizations, not knowing what the future held, canceled their Summer 2020 internships. The companies that continued with their internships converted them to remote or virtual opportunities.

After the last recession during which companies stopped hiring, once the economy started to improve, some of them fell behind because it took them three to five years to recover and resume developing their workforce for the future.

Organizations that respond similarly during this pandemic will have extreme hardship recovering, competing, and securing the talent they need for tomorrow.

Though there might be pauses or changes to internships, or the need to rescind some opportunities, organizations can offer learning experiences to teach their recruits about skills and competencies that will be important in their future work environment.

This guide was created to help you convert your internships to virtual.

1 KEY QUESTIONS AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHEN CONVERTING TO VIRTUAL:

Develop an approach for converting from in-person to virtual by answering some questions:

- Will your in-person internships translate adequately to a virtual platform?
- What are the constraints of converting to virtual?
- What will the new program look like?
- Can you utilize the same number of interns virtually as you would in-person?
- How do the goals and objectives need to be adjusted?
- What are the costs or savings associated with a virtual program?
- Can you change the format to micro-internships (short-term, project-based)?

Define virtual work and programming:

- What will be the benefit to your organization?
- Will there be a product developed from the program?
- Can this format be used in future years?
- Will virtual internships allow you to hire interns from a broader geographical area?
- How can you improve your organization's brand through this program?
- Will this help your organization become an employer of choice?
- What will the intern expect to complete, learn or plan for the future?
- What will you expect of interns during their internships?

Determine the program size, structure and cost:

- To determine the overall structure of the program, work within the constraints of your resources
- Set an intern-to-supervisor ratio
- Develop a reporting structure
- Require enough tasks to keep interns engaged with meaningful work
- Budget items to consider:
 - Payroll: (Intern count x length of internship x hours worked per week x hourly rate) + payroll taxes
 - Project resources
 - Interviews/screenings
 - Soft skills training, if needed
 - Technology – laptops, hotspots, broadband, etc.
 - Communications/mentoring/monitoring



Redesign or repurpose previous tasks for the virtual environment:

- Encourage creativity in thinking about how the intern may engage with your work team
- Where field work might not be possible, look for skills/industry-based learning opportunities
- Consider research to find process improvement in a department
- Consider tools/equipment needed
- Identify business groups that could be involved in the internship program
- Start and end time each day – will it be 40 hours per week or less?
- Number of hours needed each week for training and work time

DETERMINE THE BALANCE OF REMOTE WORK AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

An internship is not just about producing a work product, but is an opportunity for an intern to learn firsthand if the career path is one they want to continue pursuing. Identify and prioritize development opportunities.

Be mindful of students who may be burdened with distractions during the workday due to limited control over their surroundings.

As you consider program goals and objectives, keep in mind that both supervisors and interns will need help along the way.

Development opportunities to consider:

- Orientation
- Virtual meeting etiquette
- Interviewing and resume writing
- Job search and application review
- Career and/or facility exposure in different business areas
- Communications: presentations or elevator speeches
- Microsoft tools: PowerPoint, Excel, Word
- Financial literacy

Training may include:

- New hire training
- IT security
- Policies/procedures
- Company structure
- Position/field/safety specifics
- How to deal with distractions while working remotely

Virtual work tasks and description

- Business area-specific tasks
- General internship tasks
- Required tools/technology
- Project(s), presentation(s) and/or reports
- Job-specific work exposure
- Virtual mentorship

Technology needs:

- Hard/software (platforms, systems, third-party applications)
- Communications options – Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Facetime
- Access to proper software, files, internet, etc.
- IT support
- Cybersecurity
- Monitoring student attendance structure (system log in, time tracking)



IT needs to make sure students have secure laptops and have the necessary broadband.

Provide clear daily structure. Managers should break down projects into district, actionable tasks.

VIRTUAL INTERNSHIP SUCCESS STRATEGIES

How an intern uses their time while working remotely varies from person to person. There are those who will have the right balance, those who may procrastinate, and others who may exceed the boundaries and work so much that they experience burnout. Emphasize the most meaningful human interactions. Interns covet face-to-face time and detailed feedback from supervisors they respect.

Here are some items to consider implementing for monitoring interns:

- Set clear goals and expectations for deliverables
- Create work pods with a team leader for relationship building and collaboration
- Encourage teams to meet regularly with virtual face-to-face meetings to build community
- Formal supervisors should participate in the virtual face-to-face meetings, weekly, or bi-weekly depending on the length of the program
- Supervisors should have regularly scheduled one-on-one meetings with intern

Distance mentoring

- Avoid replacing video meetings with email – body language and tone of voice say a lot
 - Keep commitments and follow through on plans and activities – dependability is essential to strong mentoring relationships
 - Forwarding information relevant to the mentee keeps the mentor-mentee relationship alive between scheduled video meetings
 - Stay focused during conversations by removing distractions and practice being in the moment
 - Agree on ways you will communicate and find what works best – phone, email, instant messaging, text or videoconferencing
 - Determine meeting days and times in advance
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PROGRAM ASSESSMENT DURING AND AFTER INTERNSHIP

Just as you would with an in-person internship, you want to design evaluation mechanisms to help your internship program improve. This helps ensure your program is on track to meet your organization's desired goals and objectives. By evaluating the program throughout, you can address issues along the way. A structured format allows you to track an intern's performance and provide appropriate coaching.

If you need additional assistance, contact Missouri Intern Connect at info@MOInternConnect.com or call Kelly Dyer at 573-634-3511.

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