

Tips for a Successful Virtual Internship Experience



Create a Professional Environment

Although you are not in a traditional office environment, you should still make an effort to dress professionally. In addition, a clean, quiet workspace with your chargers, a notepad and reliable Wi-Fi is essential to a successful virtual experience. Conference calls or Teams check-ins are common methods of communication for a virtual internship and you do not want your POCs or fellow team members to have any difficulty reaching you. You could also set up an area of your apartment, dorm, or house that will serve as your office. In short, even if you are not physically in an office, you should feel like you are at work—this is even more critical as you will have video Microsoft Teams chats with various colleagues and executive leaders from the Bank.

Please also keep in mind that at times you will be dealing with some confidential information, so don't leave your laptops open/unlocked if you step away at any given time whether at home or at another remote location. Please be aware of confidentiality at all times – this is very important.

Ultimately, acing a virtual internship is not so different from acing a traditional internship. It is important to be prepared, professional, and proactive. Do your work well, communicate as much as possible, and you should thrive in your virtual internship.

Be Timely and Manage Your Time Effectively

With a virtual internship, you will not have a supervisor's physical presence to keep you on task. But whether you are working at a cubicle or at home, it's important to stay on top of deadlines. Do not let distractions tempt you; treat your time at work seriously. Keep track of important dates and assignments in your calendars. (This is great practice no matter what full-time job you take later down the line.) Like with any internship, your goal should be to stand out as best you can. If the tasks that you are given do not keep you busy for long, ask for more work, as this will impress your supervisor. Most importantly, do not ever miss a deadline or leave a task unfinished.

Do Not Be Afraid to Ask for Help

While you're trying to be the intern super-hero this summer, bear in mind this is an internship for a reason—you're learning. While you should certainly be an independent thinker, you will not be expected to know everything. And the first couple of weeks might be stressful because not only are you just starting, but you are starting in an environment you're probably not familiar with—the virtual one. Even though you are not on-site, don't be afraid to ask questions via email, Teams chat, text message, or via the phone. Ask plenty of questions. This will make you more comfortable with your assignments, communicating with leaders and enable you to better produce quality work.

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Stay Connected & Practice Over-Communication

When you do not have the benefit of physical proximity, it can be hard to feel connected at times. Figure out early the best way to communicate with each team member, and make sure to follow through via those channels—if they prefer emails, consider sending a weekly email recap about lessons you’ve learned, projects you’ve made progress on, and any questions that might have arisen during the week. If they prefer face-to-face meetings, come to your virtual check-ins prepared with notes, questions, and ideas. Being overly prepared is appreciated and but it is also expected.

As a virtual employee, you never want your team to wonder what you are working on (or even worse, if you are working at all). To avoid this, check in with your team at the beginning of every shift detailing what you will be working on throughout the day. Then, follow up as you make your way through your tasks.

Let your team know when you move from one task to another and then at the end of the day, send a recap email to your manager listing exactly what you accomplished during your shift. These recap emails are good opportunities to really highlight your work ethic and quality, and they also keep you in the front of your manager’s mind when the time comes to ask for a recommendation down the line. Treat this internship as a job interview these next few weeks, as that is how we are viewing it.

Ask for Feedback

The biggest benefit to any internship is getting real-life experience in the workplace, which can help shape your future and mold your skill set to suit your career goals. In order to maximize your remote internship experience, be clear with your managers that you desire feedback so that you can continue to grow as a professional. This might mean hopping on a quick call to review changes they have made to a project draft you delivered or using suggestions and comments in a shared document.

When soliciting feedback from colleagues, it is key to accept said feedback graciously; think of critique as a favor, because it will help you improve your work. The lessons you take away from your internship will follow you into your first full-time job in your desired field, so capture every bit of advice you can!

Be Patient

We all like to have things done as soon as possible, all at once, but it does not always work like that in the virtual world. Please remember that your POCs and mentors will have lots going on simultaneously, and this, by the way, will be true in every job you have moving forward. Due to this experience being virtual, you can’t always see when your supervisor is busy, and you don’t know what else might be going on.

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Working in the virtual world, your co-workers are on different schedules and probably have lots on their plate. We might not always be able to respond right away. Working in a virtual environment lets you have a flexible schedule, but it requires to you be flexible, too. So, learn to be patient, even if it does not come naturally.

This internship will be a great experience, and will give you flexibility and a chance to demonstrate your ability to work independently, as well as this will be a great tool to prepare you for the real world. Plus, virtual and flexible jobs are on the rise, too, so this online internship might turn out to be exactly the experience you need.

Emphasize Communication & Networking

The opportunity to network is often one of the most valuable advantages of an internship. It is also one of the most valuable advantages of a *virtual* internship, but it may require a bit more effort on your part. Schedule several calls and/or virtual meetings throughout your internship to check in and to ensure that you are on track. You will also likely communicate with your supervisor via email. If there are any other employees who you believe could be important contacts for you, reaching out over email can be a great way to introduce yourself.

Please be prepared and do your research before entering each day of your program. Research who will be presenting to you and come prepared with questions for each of them, either regarding their personal career path/experience or line of business that they work in. Impress each and every member of the team when you have that short amount of time with them during the summer. First impressions go a long way!

Take Initiative

Our last tip for rocking your virtual internship is to take initiative! Once you have completed the items on your to-do list, let somebody on your team know that you're available to take on something new. Do not just sit around and wait for somebody to reach out to you!

The goal of an internship is to learn, so take advantage of all the opportunities that you can. If you see an opportunity to work on a new kind of project or to listen in to a call with leaders of the Bank, do not be afraid to ask about it!