



How to Manage a

Remote Internship Scheme

Making your remote internship programme a success

Freshminds
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In summary

These are extraordinary times across the globe. Onboarding new employees remotely is a new challenge for many companies, but there are a lot of ways to make this easier for your business and the new starters alike.

When it comes to graduates or student interns, however, it's important to remember that they are, in fact, likely to be the easiest demographic to slot into remote working. For example, they will be used to spending a lot of time revising in university bedrooms or libraries on their own so should have a good idea of how to push themselves and work well remotely. Also, interns will have most likely not set foot in a proper office, so in many ways, this will be a case of setting some clear rules for working that suit your structure whilst remembering to consider the lines of communication, agenda for workload and creating team bonds.

What to consider



Tools for the job

Technology

Step number one in any remote set up is to make sure the technology is in place to maintain communication and ensure that everyone can work productively.

Technology checklist:



Ensure they have the correct computer equipment:	
a. Do they have their own laptop that they can use that can process the required applications?	
b. Do the files need to be encrypted? Send a laptop	
Ensure all systems, shared drives access and security networks are set up	
Check that interns have good Wi-Fi access and unlimited data. If not, then there are hotspots which can be purchased to provide the necessary internet connection	
Do you have the technology for working together remotely? Our clients are using Zoom, MS Teams, Skype, Google Hangouts.	
Do you have a process for sharing work/ reviewing work/ sharing screens etc? Consider Google drives/ WeTransfer	
Provide a number for them to call for IT enquiries and to get all applications etc set up correctly	



Opening the lines

Communication and structure

In the absence of face-to-face interaction, it's vital to retain communication with interns to set tasks, ensure work is underway, and help establish a connection between yourselves as well as between the interns who will be working together.

On the first day, set up a group call to introduce yourselves and the interns to one another, and set out a few core principles about how to work and staying in touch; including:

- Underlining the strict confidentiality of the advisory work and ensuring that the computer is locked should there be flatmates etc.
- Normalise video contact from the start and quickly (using Teams/ Zoom etc), from the off. This can be quite alien until you've done your first c5 calls
- All video calls should have the camera enabled to increase the level of facetime
- Advise that interns are clearly allowed to get up from the desk to make tea/coffee/ take exercise, but if they are away for some time then they should inform their manager in case they need to be contacted
- General encouragement of communicating little and often – especially for someone who has not been in a structured 'office' environment

Here are some structured communications to consider and can be picked up depending on the scale of communication needed – we are happy to advise on a case-by-case basis. The main thing is to set timeframes for team meetings to build up a rapport and ensure tasks are underway.

- Daily 9am video calls for the business to get together
- Daily 9:30am calls for the project team to have a more local catch up on tasks for the day
- End of the day 'wrap up' if necessary
- Guidance on working hours and lunch etc



A recipe for success

Productivity

Working from home throws up various challenges to remain productive, but there are a few ways to help manage interns to maintain efficiency over the scheme, including:

- Setting really clear scoping and expectations of tasks – each day or each week (use of templates/ previous examples/ more detailed calls to get aligned)
- Setting regular check-ins to ensure alignment in task – or iteration if client demands have changed
- Creating a clear process for offering feedback; consider a more structured weekly 'line management' call with feedback both ways



In the absence of the watercooler

Social interactions

Social bonds are an important factor in creating team connections and building a company employer brand, also helping with conversion to a permanent offer. In the absence of being able to create these in-person, here are a few things to think about to help boost this virtually:

- It's advisable to create a chat channel between the interns and other Analysts to share ideas, concerns and workload
- Consider a 'buddy' scheme, giving each intern an Analyst buddy who is a year or two above them to be an initial point of contact and advisor
- End of week virtual drinks on a Friday at 5pm to end the week. To go further could be to set up a weekly quiz with one person responsible or on a rotational basis



Creating safe spaces and trust

Psychological safety

The highest-performing teams have one thing in common: psychological safety. This is the process of building trust and 'safe spaces' for communication, meaning that employees can know that won't be punished for making mistakes. Studies show that psychological safety allows for moderate risk-taking, open communication and creativity; something which is an added challenge for remote working, but even more important in these situations. Here are a couple of things to consider to help build this within teams:

- Be upfront that this is a challenging situation and new working environment for everyone involved
- Consider a virtual 'ice-breaker' in the initial meeting on the first day to introduce something about themselves outside of work or academia; it's important to establish connections of people who won't be meeting in person and create a level of social trust
- Create a trusting working environment. This will be helped by clear communication from leadership, good networks in the other interns and Analysts and any other more 'informal' lines of communication
- Make it clear that people can feel open to express their challenges without fear of reproach



Consider the face-to-face

Offline

This is an evolving situation, so it's well worth being aware of the fact that as restrictions change or evolve it might well be worth pencilling in time in the office (or even face-to-face activity) should restrictions allow.

Contact

Freshminds are here to help with any questions or follow up information. We can work with your team to set up the best structure for managing your remote team depending on your requirements.

Get in touch to discuss further.

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