

## Employer Guide - supporting a remote working internship

With unprecedented times, many organisations and workers will be finding ways to adapt to remote working. We hope the following guidelines will be useful to your business and managers in the current working climate, to support interns in being productive and receiving a quality internship. Warwick defines an internship as; a structured, pre-defined period of work, with agreed goals and objectives, which sits outside of studies.

This guide is based on our experiences of running the [Warwick Summer Internships Programme](#), University of Warwick guidelines on remote working and drawing on information from organisations including CIPD and ACAS.

This guide can be used in conjunction with the [Employer Guide 'How to maximise the contribution an intern makes'](#) and information found on the [Internships, Placements & Work Experience website](#).

Other useful references:

- [Getting the most from remote working – CIPD](#) – offering top tips around remote working as well as legal and contractual considerations
- [How to work remotely, by Tome Duarte, Senior Engineering Manager at Web Summit](#)
- [Remote Working: Setting Yourself and Your Teams Up for Success, LinkedIn Learning: - \(various resources available\)](#)

### **Generation Z**

Although many of our students may be inexperienced with the world of work, they will be used to working independently, undertaking research, are keen to learn and demonstrate their ability and seek friendly and flexible work environments supported by technology.

### **Remote working**

Remote working is not just about a physical distance, it is also about a distance in relationship and requires a different mind-set, whilst accepting liability and responsibility as you would for any other employee. This includes your normal responsibilities around insurance, but also ensuring that any Health and Safety risk assessment is undertaken and explained to the individual during their induction. The CIPD have published ['Ten Top Tips: Legal and contractual considerations for homeworking'](#).

### **What are the areas to consider before offering a remote internship?**

- How will a remote worker fit within your current organisation culture?
- Will providing a remote internship serve the outcomes you are looking for?
- Do you have a distinct full/part-time project that can be managed virtually (research projects are ideal or social media, marketing, using languages and cultural knowledge to open up new markets)?
- Can you give the intern a project brief sharing an overview of the project, objectives, what is out of scope, key tasks and output/deliverables which is realistic for both your organisation and intern?
- Do you have the time available to dedicate to this with the potential impact of non-face to face working?
- Do you have managers who are happy to support a virtual internship project around planning, monitoring milestones, undertake reviews, checking in and support for the interns? In a virtual,

- commercial environment it may be more difficult for interns to be aware of expectations for standards of work, leading to putting undue pressure on themselves, these need to be discussed and shared
- Have you considered that homeworking may take time for all to get used to both practically, emotionally and it may be more difficult to make things happen? There could be greater reliance on other mediums such as WhatsApp, telephone calls and video conferencing
- During the internship how can the intern get involved with group work with colleagues and gain an insight into the business to support developing team working and gaining commercial awareness?
- Be aware that over the summer vacation, interns may be operating in a different time zone and have personal and academic commitments during term time
- Do you have the equipment and resources to support your intern or will they be using their own laptop/desktop with associated access to Microsoft Office, internet, antivirus software, headphones? Some students may have barriers to accessing devices, software and connectivity
- Should the intern be paid based on hours worked, piece-rate or a full-time employee? In line with our [Advertising Policy](#), students should be paid at [UK National Minimum Wage or above \(or the National Living Wage for student aged 25+\)](#). Watch out for additional working hours! An easy mistake to make would be to employ a student to work for 37 hours per week, at National Minimum Wage, then ask them to work for a few extra hours – this would mean that you were effectively paying them at less than NMW.

### **What are the benefits in offering a remote working internship?**

- the ability to widen your employment pool to consider all over the country/world (in accordance with your Remote Working policy/protocol and compliance with relevant regulations, for example the host country's employment laws)
- gain a fresh and international perspective
- the ability to offer an agile/flexible working package that many students would find attractive
- the chance to move the culture and practices of your organisation forward to incorporate more agile and collaborative work styles supported by new technology.

### **Recruitment & Selection**

You should run your recruitment process in the same way as for any other prospective employee, to ensure:

- Fair and equal access to a more diverse talent pool and workforce (Equality Act 2010)
- Clear information about the internship opportunity, to avoid time-wasting
- Honest description of any future prospects, to optimise outcomes.

In line with our advertising policy, remote working opportunities can be advertised on [myAdvantage](#), provided they treat students equally to other staff in areas including health, safety and welfare and include a clear indication in the title and advert details that the role will work remotely.

When designing and recruiting to a remote working internship we advise employers to consider guidance on areas to include in the vacancy:

- A clear indication in the title and advert details that the role will work remotely
- Includes a defined project or projects that require the intern to take ownership over delivery against an agreed timeline, with appropriate supervision to acknowledge that this is a learning experience and to support performance and outputs
- Where project fits into the organisation and its strategy
- A clear description of responsibilities/example deliverables
- person specification, broken into Essential and Desirable skills/experience
- Delivers genuine insight into the challenges and rewards of working in your organisation and sector
- How induction will be supported
- Training and support available
- How communication will be managed with other employees/the organisation
- What equipment and software will be provided or required
- Allowable expenses and any costs that will be covered, and to what extent (e.g. software licenses, headset, heating, lighting, broadband), any responsibility for repair and replacement if own equipment is used
- Working pattern and hours, including specifying if role involves agile working
- Insurance coverage, and/or limitations on insurance coverage, pertinent to the role

Why not utilise the technology during the recruitment and selection process that the intern would be using during their remote working internship, offering video interviews, presentations and role play scenarios through video conferencing software?

Right to work checks have been temporarily adjusted due to coronavirus (COVID-19). Checks continue to be necessary, but can be carried out over video call, using scanned documents or a photo of documents visit - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-right-to-work-checks>

Refer to the [Recruiting](#) website page for further information on Advertising, Shortlisting & Selection, Making offers and Pay and agreements.

### **Prior to the internship**

- Arrange a conversation with the intern to start building the relationship, understand and agree expectations – share company guidance on remote working
- Encourage the intern to consider:
  - o The times during the day when they are most productive
  - o How they will get into a routine to help stay on track and motivated
  - o Have they thought about their own wellbeing – making time to chat with colleagues, taking fresh air, taking breaks with drinks and healthy snacks
  - o To be fair to themselves in terms of productivity
- Understand their personal development objectives and training needs and how this will be delivered and supported. This could involve sending business emails, setting up a meeting in outlook, how they are going to develop their network and wider commercial awareness. Encourage your intern to engage with the [Warwick Learning & Development Moodle course](#) if they have not already done so.

- Agree when they will be present 'at work' during agreed core hours or when they will work, bearing in mind the maximum weekly working hours and the [Working Time Directive](#)
- Consider how the intern will be supervised, there will be a need for more regular support and communication whilst the intern is working virtually
- Outline how the intern can access your documents and share how work will be recorded, stored and shared, taking into account GDPR, data security and confidentiality
- Consider training required if working with sensitive data:
  - o Not leaving a laptop unattended and logged in
  - o Being careful who can see the screen
  - o Not copying data onto another device via USB stick or hard drive
  - o Being cautious who and how the data is sent on to
  - o If working on a personal device the need for caution when viewing, opening, working and downloading protected, restricted or reserved data (data classification), including sensitive personal data
  - o Ensuring operating system is up-to-date, turning on auto updates, installing a virus scanner.
- Consider how the homeworking arrangement will be confirmed through a consent form/ arrangement/employee contract and how the intern is aware of their rights around e.g. holiday and sick pay
- When the intern will be added to the payroll, do they need to sign documents around confidentiality, understand intellectual property, what business insurance is in place?
- Carry out health and safety checks so you can make any necessary adjustments or equipment. This [government guide](#) has useful information and a home workstation checklist
- Outline the costs that will be supported by the business e.g. broadband, heating, lighting, headphones, as well as repair and replacement.

### **During the internship**

- What will [induction](#) now look like? On-line, virtual tour of the office, face to face via software such as Microsoft Teams, [Zoom](#), [Skype](#) or will resources be accessed online or shared via documents?
- Will a buddy help the intern to settle in more quickly?
- Be clear (SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound) on the outcomes looking to be achieved for the project. Students are goal oriented and will respond well to this approach
- Be proactive and clear in communication, it is better to over-communicate. It may be more appropriate to 'TELL' initially to provide the support and guidance on what is required
- Plan in regular catch ups to review work, gather feedback and understand their wellbeing and how they are finding this work approach. Manage expectations around receiving immediate answers and encourage any problems accessing files, internet, problems with working to be shared
- Stress the need to keep their work calendar and out of office up to date to support colleagues
- Ensure the intern has the opportunity to join any online groups so they feel included e.g. team or department chats, online social groups

- Who else can they go to if the line manager is not available?
- Share how the intern needs to report sickness.

### **End of the internship**

- Consider how you would like the intern to hand over work/digital files/emails and remove them from their personal laptop (if applicable)
- Can the intern give a video presentation of their project, findings and develop their presentation skills?
- Arrange an exit interview and agree how this will happen - feedback can be gathered on the internship project and working remotely to support this area in the future
- Draw out the intern's learning from remote working to support them in understanding their preferences and skills developed
- Consider how you would like to keep in touch – connect via LinkedIn, write a reference, read an entry on their CV
- Can the intern come into the office when appropriate and present the project, hear from others about their career, network, work shadow, be assigned a mentor or attend an interview if you are keen to further get to know the intern in person?

If have an idea for a project and would like to discuss further, please contact  
The Internships Development Team - [placementlearning@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:placementlearning@warwick.ac.uk)