



Managing a remote opportunity

Managing a student is a rewarding experience, an opportunity to contribute to the development of a student and introduce a student perspective to our work. Managing remotely will be different to having them in the office with you, here are some tips to help you and your intern have a successful internship

HR Support

Central HR have produced some excellent guidance on New starts and Remote Induction. It covers the essential training your intern will need to complete and provides tips on communication and welcoming your intern. <https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/induction>

Embedding working culture

If there is no opportunity to physically introduce your employee to the team or place of work, it is going to be challenging to foster a sense of belonging with your organisation rather than as a student. While working as an employee we are looking for them to think of your organisation as a workplace and a future employer once they have graduated. This is essential to ensure the students are having a workplace learning experience, rather than an extension of their academic studies.

What can you do to help this?

- Think about assigning them more than one buddy.
- Arrange for colleagues not working directly with the intern to introduce themselves and discuss their role – this is helpful for the Interns career learning and to build up their network.
- Explain how they, you, the team and the department fit into the bigger picture.
- Encourage your intern to set up their own meetings with colleagues.
- Include them in any virtual socialising your area is doing e.g. virtual coffee, film or book clubs.
- Ensure they are on the staff email distribution list.
- Talk to them about how your area has made the transition to remote working, the challenges and benefits that you have observed.
- Encourage them to update their email signature with their job title, team and department and to use their “work email” rather than their “student email”.

Objectives

Setting clear objectives for the project and the employee development are essential, when working remotely these become critically important. Using the SMART method will ensure clarity. This also gives you an opportunity to have a discussion on setting expectations, for you and the Intern.

Setting Objectives: <https://app.goodpractice.net/#/edinburgh-development/s/f797c9c7>

Communicate, communicate, communicate

Building up a rapport and ensuring that trust is built between you and the employee is necessary when working remotely as they will be working independently in a different environment to you. You will not have the same visual availability that you would have in an office environment.

Decide on how you will communicate, video calls are good to build relationships as you can see body language and get to know someone a bit better. Whatever you decide, ensure you are both clear on what it is and know how to use the technology. The first couple of weeks will naturally involve lots of conversations through induction and getting the project underway. Following this you may want to start off with daily catch ups and as they get settled into the project you can move to less





frequent catch-ups. A daily check-in – a quick email or teams chat message from a duty of care perspective is advisable.

Time keeping and self-management

These are key skills that interns tell us they want to develop through their role and essential for working remotely. Find out if there is anything in their home working environment that could present problems. Ensure the student knows how to manage their outlook diary, ask them what tools they are going to use and check in to see if they are working. The Intern is learning to work, these are helpful conversations to them to have. Be clear on deadlines and when you want them to communicate with you, if they are going to complete tasks early or they will be delayed. Ensure the Intern knows if there are any standards that your area follows e.g. for recording leave or being unavailable.

Working remotely is a different way of working, so you may want to think of it as task bound rather than time bound e.g. you are asking the student to complete a project with milestones that they are to reach. Think about what your expectations are and communicate these clearly to your employee so that they are clear when they should be available.

Skills Development

Discussing with your employee the skills they are developing will enrich their experience and help them to evaluate their skills. These are a few they may be developing:

- Communication
- Building an online network
- Demonstrating initiative
- Managing their own workload
- Managing up and setting expectations (communicating challenges and success with you)
- Managing their time
- Resilience
- Self-management
- Adaptability/flexibility

Encourage Reflection

This is a unique situation, the world of work is changing at speed due to current circumstances. To help your employee learn and adapt to the situation questions you could ask them are:

- what are you observing about your place of work?
- what do they think about the leadership in your area and what do they see demonstrated across the world?
- How do they feel about being a remote worker?
- How bonded do they feel to the team can you help with this?
- Have they made the adjustment from student to worker?

Celebrate Success!

The work experience is a step into the world of work for students and should allow them to begin to understand their identity as an employee, to discover their strengths and figure out what they like and what they don't. This can still be achieved through a virtual or remote role given the right support. Ensure they know it and you celebrate their successes throughout the internship and communicate their achievements with your colleagues.





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