

Starting an internship working from home

While starting an internship from home might not be what you were imagining, there are still things you can do to ensure it's a positive experience that you learn a lot from.

Here are some tips on how to make the most of your experience:

1

Ask questions.

Check your assumptions and make sure you understand the expectations of you in your role. Here are some questions that might be helpful to clarify with your supervisor, if they haven't already discussed these with you:

- What hours am I expected to work?
- When will you and I be checking in with each other each day?
- What's your preferred communication tool - video or phone calls?
- How would you like me to track my work and keep you updated on progress?

2

Be visible.

Keep your supervisor updated on your progress. You might find the approaches below helpful to adopt:

- Send a progress email to your supervisor when you finish for the day.
- Be responsive to emails. A short "Great, I'll have this ready by 5pm" is always appreciated. It helps build trust and ensures your supervisor knows what is going on.
- Be transparent about your time. If you are taking a break or working on something offline for an extended period, update your calendar and/or drop your supervisor a note to let them know.
- Check in at the end of the week if these approaches are working for your supervisor. Pivot as needed.

3

Connect with colleagues.

Whilst we can't be together physically right now, that doesn't mean you can't connect with colleagues and start to build long lasting relationships during your internship. If you are assigned a buddy, reach out to them, ask them about their career. Attend meetings, turn your camera on, add colleagues on LinkedIn and get involved in the social side of things.

4

Dress and groom for the occasion.

In your first week it's better to be overdressed than too casual. Pay attention to what colleagues are wearing. A casual appearance may give the impression you aren't ready for the experience and/ or you don't care about the opportunity. A shower and a change of clothes at the beginning of the day will help you feel ready to work.

5

Create a professional zone.

Maybe you are lucky and have a great working from home set up. If not. Think about the following:

- A conversation with the people you live with to discuss expectations. Unless you live alone, the chances are multiple people will be working from home at the same time.
- Create an ergonomically friendly space to work from that's clean and hazard free.

6

Create positive habits.

During the first few weeks of a job it's usually tiring learning colleagues' names, the internal jargon and navigating new systems and processes. Here are some tips to help start creating positive habits:

- Create boundaries. If possible have one space at home for work and stick to core hours.
- Take breaks. You might need to set an alarm to remind yourself to stretch/take a walk, have a screen break.
- Recharge. In your personal time do things that energise you.

7

Prepare to pivot.

You no doubt had expectations of the nature of work you would be completing. Right now, it might be challenging for your organisation to offer the experience you anticipated virtually. Remain flexible and eager to learn.

8

Manage your time.

This internship might be your first job, these basics productivity hacks will help you:

- Start a to-do list. Add new items and tick them off once complete. Not only will it help you stay organised, it will also provide a sense of accomplishment.
- Manage your calendar. If you have a lot of meetings make sure you block out focus time to complete work.
- If a meeting starts at 10am make sure you're on time. Virtual meetings typically start on time, if you're late you are likely to miss introductions and your opportunity to introduce yourself to others.
- Set yourself alarms. If you are working towards a deadline, break the work up into chunks and set yourself time to complete each chunk of work.

9

Be an empathetic colleague.

You are no doubt experienced in writing assignments and doing uni work from home but your colleagues/supervisor might not be. Your supervisor might be a full-time worker and full-time parent who is home schooling. Ask what you can do to make their life easier.

Finally, if you have specific need to successfully work from home, mention it as early as possible. Employers may assume you are comfortable using your own device and you have a laptop etc. Maybe you need access to software that helps you do your best work. You can also discuss such situations with the [UTS Accessibility](#) team who have a range of support available to help you succeed.

