

**Making the Most of Your Intern**

Employer Guide

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# Introduction

Thank you for recruiting an intern through the University of Exeter. The purpose of this guide is to provide you with useful tips and guidance for working with your intern, to ensure that all involved get the most out of the opportunity.

# Before your intern starts

We will be in touch with your intern to provide them with our ‘Making the Most of Your Internship’ guide and for GBPs working at the University of Exeter, HR will be in touch with a Contract of Employment and other HR guidance.

You will need to contact your intern directly (if you do this by phone we recommend that you follow up with an email) to confirm what they need to do to prepare for starting their new job and arrangements for their first day of work. This could include:

* Agreeing a working pattern.
* Where and how to report for work.
* Dress code for your workplace. Even if your intern is working remotely, you may have expectations of how employees dress when conducting video calls.
* Travel advice to get to your workplace (where applicable).
* Access to food and drink facilities in or near the workplace.
* Check they have received, signed and returned their Contract of Employment.
* Ensure they have provided their Right to Work evidence.

Most interns have some work experience, but this will likely not be extensive experience of working in a professional environment and like many more experienced professionals, they probably won’t have much (if any!) experience of working remotely. As such, communicating a reassuring message before their first day will be welcomed.

# Induction

The [Internship Induction Checklist](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/careersandemployability/internshipsandmentoring/scp/Internship_Induction_Checklist.docx) is a tick list of some of the areas you may wish to cover with your intern during their induction period, including:

* Personnel documentation and information
* Health and Safety (includes COVID-19 issues)
* IT
* Getting to know your organisation
* Getting to know who the intern will be working with
* Expectations of how the intern will work
* Support and Training

If you are employing a GBP at the University of Exeter, please instead follow the [University’s Induction Code of Practice.](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/induction/facilitators/)

# Setting SMART objectives

Once you have discussed the scope of the internship project you will want to establish the objectives that you want the intern to achieve in their time with you. Setting SMART objectives will make it clear to the intern what you are expecting of them:

* **Specific** – What exactly do you want the intern to achieve? Is there any chance it could be misinterpreted? Consider asking the intern to explain the project to you as they have understood it, to check that you are “on the same page”.

**Measurable** – What criteria will be used to measure the success of the project/the intern’s role in this? Time saved? Hits on the company website? Revenue generated?

* **Achievable** – Is the project achievable in terms of resources, knowledge, experience and time? Taking into account possible constraints, how can the intern’s own objectives for the project be accomplished?
* **Relevant** – How does the project align with the company’s goals? Whether they are working on part of a wider project, or a standalone piece of work, explain to your intern the overall impact of their work and how this feeds the company strategy.
* **Time-based** – Ensure the project has a completion date and interim deadlines, where necessary.

# Monitoring work and performance

When monitoring work content and managing performance, we recommend you regularly ask the intern about the following key areas:

* A summary of what they have been working on, including how long they have spent on it.
* What is going well?
* Any concerns and their ideas on how to resolve these.
* Information or decisions needed from you/others in your organisation.

We recommend that the intern meets with their line manager regularly. Previous interns have suggested daily meetings in the first week, then once every 1-2 weeks after this. Of course as we work remotely informal contact in the workplace does not exist, so we would ask you maintain daily check in with your intern until this changes.

You can create your own performance indicators or you are welcome to use our [Internship Performance Development (PDR) Review](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/careersandemployability/internshipsandmentoring/Internship_PDR.pdf). If you are line managing a University of Exeter GBP you will instead be required to complete the [online University PDR process.](https://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/development/pdr/)

# Working remotely (top tips)

Working remotely is now more common than it has ever been. We recognise that this is an opportunity not afforded to all, and is considered a position of trust. The fact that your intern may not be seeing you in person each day will bring both pluses and minuses to your working style and relationship. We have compiled “10 top tips for remote working” to help you manage what may still be a relatively (or completely!) new way of working for you both; though much of this is relevant even to more “conventional” workplace settings!

**1. Create a work space**

Interns are encouraged to create a dedicated workspace to approach working from home in an organised and efficient manner. If their home does not have a separate home office, we advise using a well-lit and ordinarily little-used space in their home that can provide them with enough room for their equipment and resources, ideally away from their rest areas.

They may be sharing their home with their family or flatmates so creating a protected work space may not be easy. Some ideas they could use to facilitate productive home-working include: using headphones, having a sign on the door of their room or their laptop saying ‘please do not disturb until …’, building in regular breaks to play with the children in the household or agreeing with others not to use domestic appliances during a certain time period.

As an employer please ensure that your intern is abiding by this [working safely with display screen equipment guidance](https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/). If your intern has a disability we ask that you please consider making [reasonable adjustments.](https://www.acas.org.uk/reasonable-adjustments)

**2. Equipment and technology**

The intern will need to discuss with you the equipment and technology they need to work remotely. Employers usually provide interns with this and the support they need to access the right systems e.g. shared inboxes and cloud file storage such as [MS One Drive](https://products.office.com/en-gb/onedrive/online-cloud-storage) or [Trello.](https://trello.com/)

The intern will also need to ensure they can access the right communication platforms such as [Skype for Business](https://www.skype.com/en/business/); [Cisco Webex Meetings](https://www.cisco.com/c/en_uk/products/conferencing/webex-meetings/index.html); [Meeting Owl](https://www.owllabs.com/meeting-owl?utm_campaign=brand-uk&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=ppc&msclkid=1b5c07f8a3db1418ba905965dc492dca); [Google Hangouts Meet](https://gsuite.google.com/intl/en_uk/products/meet/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=emea-gb-all-en-dr-bkws-all-all-trial-e-t1-1008069&utm_content=text-ad-crnurturectrl-none-DEV_c-CRE_430903515059-ADGP_Hybrid%20%7C%20AW%20SEM%20%7C%20BKWS%20~%20EXA_M:1_GB_EN_Hangouts_Meet-KWID_43700052494145989-kwd-293231125089-userloc_9045340&utm_term=KW_google%20hangouts%20meet-g&ds_rl=1259922&gclid=CjwKCAjwkPX0BRBKEiwA7THxiEOLJ-sDw_IrCNH8S7pnuw9drqNbWVd9fAe2Dmxxd2fDmaev5QqXSRoC2yUQAvD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds); [Zoom;](https://zoom.us/) [MS Teams](https://products.office.com/en-US/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software) and [GoToWebinar](https://www.gotomeeting.com/en-gb/webinar/lp/easy-webinars?cid=g2w_emea_ggs_cpc_brand_gotowebinar_e&gclid=CPHW-8jS8egCFY2BhQodfFQBNw).

We advise interns to be prepared for technology not working. They should consider whether their broadband has sufficient bandwidth and if where they plan to sit has good enough Wi-Fi strength. Maybe your company could provide a dongle to provide wireless or mobile broadband? If they lose connection, could they set up a [What’s App Team group](https://www.whatsapp.com/) with you so that they can still communicate with you and provide updates in the event of signal problems?

**3. Agreeing clear expectations**

We encourage interns to agree with you:

* Their working hours.
* How they will stay in touch and who will organise this.
* When their work will be set and reviewed.
* How their performance will be measured and managed.
* Where their work will be stored and who has access to it.
* When they will be taking breaks and how they will communicate this with others. Maybe they could enter their working hours in their signature, add an ‘out of office’ message on their email and/or enter their working hours on a shared team calendar.
* Who they should contact if they have any problems or if their circumstances change.

**4. Getting motivated and being productive**

We encourage interns to follow these 3 steps to get motivated and stay productive:

**A) Strategize** - What do they want to achieve and why? What is the driver or motivation behind this? Set a goal and make a list of objectives, then break them down into a list of manageable tasks. Interns’ motivation is increased when they understand the bigger picture.

**B) Focus** - Quantify how long each task takes and book it into their schedule. To prioritise, we must work on the tasks that have the nearest deadline and are deemed to have the highest importance. To establish what the highest-importance activities are, interns are asked to consider:

* What are their own responsibilities and duties?
* What are their contributions to team duties?
* What is the impact of the work?
* Who requested the work to be undertaken? How important are they to the business and the intern’s own career e.g. senior position, new customer, loyal customer.
* When was it requested?
* Who is the work being produced for?
* Who is leading on the work?
* Who do they need to collaborate with and what is their availability?
* How long does the work take to complete?
* How can the work be undertaken? Do they know how to undertake the work or does it require additional learning? Have they got access to the right information and systems?

Most people create a long ‘To Do’ list, but once the intern has decided on their priorities they can consider creating a ‘Must Do Today’ list. If they receive a lot of new emails that distract them from their list, perhaps they could consider checking their emails twice a day to see if they need to re-prioritise their day. Would that be ok for you? Try and keep the structure of the day simple. Perhaps you could ask to hear their ‘Must Do Today’ list and check in to see if they have completed it?

**C) Commit** - Have they completed everything on the ‘Must Do Today’ list? If not, reflect upon why this hasn’t worked. Is their strategy still correct? Did they prioritise correctly? Did they allocate enough time to each task they booked in? Perhaps they are procrastinating and working on the easy hits rather than the priorities? If so, maybe they should ‘[eat the frog’](https://doist.com/blog/eat-the-frog-todoist/) or deal with the most challenging task of their day first?

Maybe they need to work on a new daily routine? Did they feel ready for a day of work by waking up on time, getting washed and dressed; exercising; having breakfast and ticking off one or more home-life priorities before they started work? Creating a new morning routine can be their ‘fake commute’.

Do they need to build in energisers during the day? A quick stretch, breath of fresh air and a healthy snack can help them press the reset button.

A good way to stay motivated is to spend a moment at the end of the day looking at everything they have achieved that day and seeing how completing some urgent tasks has helped them get one step closer to achieving their goals. Maybe you would like to hear these daily achievements?

Working from home is not all about challenge. We recommend that interns reflect upon the positives it brings. For example they have a flexible job, they can make a cooked lunch and they can avoid the daily commute. Appreciating the good things in life will help them feel more motivated.

University of Exeter student and vlogger Ruby Grainger has some great [top tips on being productive](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0-trTFGfR4), especially when managing work and study commitments.

**5. Communication adjustments**

Developing and maintaining good working relationships between you and colleagues requires a change in communication styles when working remotely. As mentioned above, we encourage interns to be accountable for when they are working.

Interns should be mindful that their colleagues will have conflicting demands on their time when working at home, so it is best to check when they are available to communicate. It’s good to respect the boundaries people set.

People may be under pressure and thus helping others, including by being kind and generous with their words, will be appreciated. Perhaps the intern could instigate a virtual ‘water cooler’ chat to connect with colleagues in a non-work way.

**6. Virtual meetings**

Interns need to be encouraged to:

* Get ready in advance with their technology and agenda items.
* Consider colleagues in other time zones when they set meetings.
* Remember to switch on their camera, blur their background (or choose a suitable location) and consider their non-verbal communication.
* Invite others in to give their thoughts and ideas. Be specific and ask people by name, otherwise everyone could start talking at once.
* Speak slowly and clearly and pause before responding to others as sometimes there is a time lapse between transmissions.
* Perhaps appoint a meeting facilitator to monitor chat comments during the meeting?
* Avoid distractions like checking email or having side conversations with people in the group.
* Keep a summary of key points and actions after a virtual individual or team meeting. This may be useful for reference later on.

**7. Regular breaks**

For the intern’s health and wellbeing it is important to take regular breaks; this includes physically moving and taking a break from looking at their screen. Stepping away from their desk at lunchtime will help them feel re-energised for the afternoon ahead. They could even set up reminders to take a break; using apps such as Alexa Flash Meeting can be helpful for this.

**8. Personal support**

Social isolating or distancing can have an impact on our mental health. For information on self-care and other treatments for mental health issues please see the [mind.org coronavirus and your wellbeing webpage.](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/)

Could you support an intern through this time? Do you have HR policies and services available to them through your company?

The University can also offer personal support. [Jo McCreedie](mailto:j.mccreedie@exeter.ac.uk) from the Internships Team could offer initial support. For more specialist support they may be eligible to access the University’s [Student Wellbeing services](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/wellbeing/) or the University’s [Staff Wellbeing services.](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/wellbeing/)

**9. Flexible working**

If interns wish to change their normal working hours we advise that they get permission from you to work ‘flexible working hours’. If you have a policy on this it would be important for the intern to see that too.

**10.** **When to stop working**

When there aren’t the normal prompts to remind us that it is the end of the working day, sometimes people will let the work drift on. We should remind interns of the importance of a work-life balance to remain a happy, motivated and productive member of staff.

# How to present outputs and outcomes

As there are many ways for the interns to present the outputs and outcomes of their work to you, it is important they understand how you would like that presented. It can be a range of things from a written report to a formal presentation to managers, a 1:1 meeting to go through the work produced or an agenda item at a team meeting. The choice is yours, so consider how you would prefer to receive this information. Please also allow sufficient time during the working week for the intern to prepare and deliver their work to you in your chosen format.

# What to do if there is a problem

If for any reason you feel unhappy with the performance of your intern, we advise you to take the following steps:

* If appropriate, speak to the intern directly about your concerns. Please remember that they may not be aware of their behaviour and how it is inappropriate, as this may be a new experience for them.
* If for any reason you feel that you cannot speak directly to the intern, please contact Jo McCreedie from the University’s Internships Team (see details below).
* Similarly, if you feel that the intern is experiencing any serious personal problems, the University has a number of departments that can support the personal welfare of interns and we are able to refer interns to them.
* Please remember that if there are any problems, minor or serious, do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

# Ending or extending the internship

University of Exeter interns come from over 130 countries and once they graduate, they will end up all over the world. We would therefore ask you to ensure that the intern’s given project can be completed by the internship end date, as we cannot guarantee that they will be available beyond the agreed dates or easily accessible.

An extension of the internship is for you to agree with the intern, and the University would need to be informed. Please remember some international interns will not have the Right to Work in the UK long-term without sponsorship. Any extension would need to be a paid employment arrangement.

# Feedback

At the end of the internship, you and your intern will be asked to complete an online feedback form to describe how the internship went and to provide suggestions for improvement. Internship feedback enables us to continuously develop the internships schemes for the future. All of your comments are gratefully received. Please note that if you have received funding for your intern from the University of Exeter, providing feedback is a condition of the funding.

Please fill out an [Employer Feedback form](https://mycareerzone.exeter.ac.uk/Form.aspx?id=582349) and encourage your intern to complete their [Intern Feedback form](https://mycareerzone.exeter.ac.uk/Form.aspx?id=582266) before the end of the internship.

# Celebrating success

Previous internships have been a great success, with both employers and interns benefiting a great deal from the experience. We would love for any success to be noted and celebrated. We would encourage you to share your successful experience using your normal channels and where relevant using @UoEInternships. If you tick the box on the feedback form saying you consent to your story being used in marketing, we will create a case study story which will feature on the University’s webpages.

# Further information

The Internships Team offers a wide range of [services to employers](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/careers/employment-services/). If you would like to recruit another intern or graduate or discuss any other ways you would like to work with the University of Exeter, please contact Jo McCreedie.

# Contact us

Jo McCreedie (Employment Schemes Manager) at [J.McCreedie@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:J.McCreedie@exeter.ac.uk) or 07805637968.

University of Exeter Internships Team at [internships@exeter.ac.uk](file:///C:\Users\JM460\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\OCO6VCVI\internships@exeter.ac.uk) or [a2i@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:a2i@exeter.ac.uk).