



THE
CAREERS
SERVICE

SETTING UP REMOTE WORKING INTERNSHIPS

Over the years we have seen many interns' successfully complete projects whilst working remotely, usually because face-to-face contact wasn't required for the completion of a particular project, but now online working has become the norm and many of us are adjusting to new ways of communicating with colleagues, completing projects and maintaining our professional lives. We are hoping that for many organisations, the use of a remote intern would still be really helpful and below is some guidance on how to set up a remote working opportunity specifically for them.

If you would like to discuss whether a project is suitable as a remote working placement, you can discuss your needs with the Internship Office by emailing us at internships@careers.ox.ac.uk.

WHAT IS A SUITABLE PROJECT THAT CAN BE COMPLETED FROM HOME?

A suitable remote internship would be one that does not require the intern to be physically present at the organisation in order to successfully complete the project. For example, if the project could only be completed within a laboratory, then the project would not be suitable for a remote working internship. However, if the work is not reliant on a particular location and working remotely will not negatively impact the project, then a remote internship could be suitable as long as it meets our standard programme requirements.

If part of your project can be completed remotely, we encourage you to consider if the other part is vital to the success of the internship. If it is not, and the intern would still get some work experience, you are welcome to offer a relatively short experience, anything from a few days to a few weeks.

SUPERVISING AN INTERN REMOTELY

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DIFFERING TIMEZONES

Oxford is an international university with students coming from all around the world. We also work with many organisations that offer internships globally. Whilst working remotely, it is possible therefore that the student and the employer might be in different time zones. With this in mind, we suggest that a working day starts within 2-3 hours of the employer's working day. Therefore, when advertising a remote internship, please include your time zone and working hours, so that the student can make an informed decision as to if they can apply.

HOW DO I SUBMIT A REMOTE INTERNSHIP?

As always, submitting a project will be done via our online platform, [CareerConnect](#).

Additionally, we will continue to advertise the internships, collate all applications and send them over to the employer in the same way as we have done previously

SELECTION PROCESS

We encourage all hosts to undertake their interviews with their interns by telephone or via videoconference apps such as Skype, Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

CASE STUDIES

[Oxford Scholastica Academy](#)

What task did you get the interns to undertake remotely and how successful were they?

We hosted six interns, who had two tasks: during the first half of the week, they focused on content creation and blog writing; in the second half of the week, they were tasked with researching and designing a brand new online course product for our [Oxford summer school](#) venture. They conducted market research, and in teams put together an operational and marketing strategy. This strategy is being implemented this week - so they were very successful! We were very impressed at all the interns' dedication, flexibility, and strategic insights.

How did you go about supervising your interns remotely, were there methods that we more successful than others?

We hosted daily, sometimes twice daily, Zoom video conferences in order for them to present their work, ask any questions, and receive their next brief. The interns also set up a group chat together in order to collaborate on the projects.

What was your lasting impression of hosting an intern remotely and do you have any tips for employers looking to undertake a placement remotely next term?

This internship was not originally intended to be remote, but had to be made so given the extraordinary circumstances. I think something is lost in the lack of in-person contact, but the quality of the interns' work has been as high as or higher than I would have expected for an in-person internship. I would recommend hosting a group of interns rather than just one as they have been able to collaborate very well and keep each other company during what might otherwise have been a less stimulating experience.

Quill Project

What task did you get the interns to undertake remotely and how successful were they?

The aim for the internships was to explore the application of the Quill technology and approach to modern Parliamentary process in the UK by modelling the passage of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2019 and the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020.

How did you go about supervising your interns remotely, were there methods that we more successful than others?

One of the innovative features of the project has been the creation of a digital environment in which undergraduate students are able to collaborate with each other and academic mentors on substantive research questions and the production of a digital edition, and we were able to capitalise on this technology to allow interns access to the Quill digital platform remotely. The Digital Curator had already prepared a training manual for their use, and at the beginning of the week, she ran an induction seminar via Zoom to give everyone a chance to introduce themselves and to demonstrate how to model legislation in the platform.

What was your lasting impression of hosting an intern remotely and do you have any tips for employers looking to undertake a placement remotely next term?

One aspect of remote internships which concerned us was how to develop relationships and generate a sense of camaraderie. We had two teams of three interns, with each team allocated to one of the Acts we were modelling that week. Each team also had their own Mattermost chatroom to communicate with each other and plan their work. Members of the Quill team had access to both chatrooms and were able to troubleshoot and answer questions as they came up. Once a day, the students would check in with the Digital Curator and sometimes other members of Quill over Zoom. At the end of the week, we were very happy with what had been achieved. Further modelling and corrections by the Quill team will be necessary before the models go live, but considerable progress was made. Feedback from the group was also very positive, with three interns volunteering to join a project to model the Covid-19 bill during their self-isolation and another expressing interest in a one-year trainee position we are currently advertising.

University of Oxford and the National Trust

What task did you get the interns to undertake remotely and how successful were they?

A group of six interns undertook individual research projects on different National Trust properties to support the National Trust's 2021 public programme. The interns were each given a historic site and a list of key research questions which they answered by consulting a wide range of online archives and resources - from census records and historic newspapers to digitised books and journal articles. Each intern then created a detailed report which have been shared with National Trust property teams and curators.

The interns were brilliant throughout the week and have submitted excellent reports.

How did you go about supervising your interns remotely, were there methods that were more successful than others?

We held three group videoconferences with the interns throughout the week to provide an opportunity for them to ask questions about the project, explore the themes, share tips and useful sources, and for general questions about careers in the heritage sector. We held a longer session on the Friday afternoon (1.5hrs) where each intern presented their key findings and reflections. We used Microsoft Teams for the calls which worked much better than Skype, especially for the students with issues around internet and VPN access abroad. We had a slight challenge with time zone differences (one student was in Dubai, one in China) but managed to schedule the calls at a time that everyone could join in.

What was your lasting impression of hosting an intern remotely and do you have any tips for employers looking to undertake a placement remotely next term?

I was really impressed by the interns' enthusiasm and the quality of work they produced despite the lack access to resources, the need for remote working and their geographical spread around the world and across time zones. They all contributed brilliantly to the group discussions via videoconference, and have produced excellent written reports which will inform future National Trust work. I'm very much looking forward to hosting another remote micro-internship next term. My top tips for hosting a remote placement are: Make sure you have a very clear brief and deliverable(s) shared with the interns ahead of the placement, and schedule regular group catch-ups which provide lots of time for questions as well as wider discussion. To view other projects that have been completed as remote internships in the past visit our [website](#).