



Maximizing Success for Remote (and in person) Summer Internships

Internships are a proven way to gain relevant knowledge, skills, and valuable legal experience while establishing important connections in any field.¹ This experience will offer you a boost in marketability and will aid you in making more informed decisions regarding your career goals.² The following general tips provide insight into successful internship integration³:

- Make sure to listen to instructions, and do not hesitate to ask for clarification if needed.
- Accept assignments without complaint, make sure to complete all given tasks, and hand-in good quality work. Make an effort to be as easy-going as possible.⁴
- Show initiative by asking for additional tasks if you complete assigned tasks ahead of schedule.
- Touchbase with your supervisor regularly to ensure that both of your expectations are met. The best way to receive feedback on your performance and keep track of current and future assignments is to encourage ongoing contact.
- When you make mistakes (we all do), acknowledge them and propose a plan for resolving whatever went wrong.

Once you complete your internship, be sure to ask your supervisor for a letter of recommendation, or at least ask whether you may later ask for a strong reference. Stay in touch; this will also help your supervisor keep you in mind when future opportunities arise.

Tips for Success with Remote Internships and Remote Networking

Approach remote internships and regular internships similarly. Your primary motivation should still be to help your client population as much as you can, to build connections and impress your supervisor just as you would with an on-site internship. Find ways to stay focused, organized and behave as you would have, had your supervisor been nearby.⁵

¹ P. Loretto, "Importance of Internships for Your Professional Career", (June 25, 2019), <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/is-an-internship-really-all-that-important-1986800>

² Herzing University, "How Internships Can Benefit You Personally and Professionally", <https://www.herzing.edu/blog/how-internships-can-benefit-you-personally-and-professionally>

³P. Loretto, "Tips for Turning your Internship into a Full Time Job", (November 20, 2019), <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/top-tips-for-interns-1986781>

⁴ The University of Iowa, Pomerantz Career Center for Leadership and Career Advancement, "During Your Internship", <https://careers.uiowa.edu/students/during-your-internship>

⁵ A. Pei, "5 Tips for Making the Most of Your Remote Internship", (March 30, 2020), <https://www.hercampus.com/money-career/6-ways-rock-remote-internship>

1. Set Learning Objectives

Ask yourself:

- What skills and experiences do you hope to gain during your internship? (e.g., legal research and writing, drafting memos, fact investigation, exposure to community group partnerships)
- In what substantive areas are you most interested? What are your expectations for this experience? Are there any end products you seek to generate during this internship? (e.g., writing sample)

2. Check-in with your supervisor prior to the internship

While larger organizations will provide training or formal onboarding, others may not. In that case, making a positive initial impression will help forge stronger working relationships from the outset. During the meeting you may want to convey your own goals. If possible, gather the following information⁶:

- Clarify the duration of the internship, and the number of hours of work expected.
- Request any training materials that you can familiarize yourself with prior to beginning.
- Try to get a sense of the preferred method/means of communication with your supervisor – e.g., phone, Skype etc.
- Find out how your supervisor or the organization prefers to share documents – e.g., Dropbox or other systems.

3. Develop a Routine

Coping with stressful situations is easier when you maintain as much of your usual routine as possible. To fight all the distractions that come with remote working, come up with a work schedule to stay organized! Lay out all your responsibilities for the day or week, and then map out time blocks to complete each.

If you do find yourself straying away from your schedule, you may need to alter your agenda a bit or create an incentive to motivate yourself to get back on track. Reward yourself! For example, you can extend your lunch break in your schedule so you can further recharge, or you can allow yourself to chat with friends for a half-hour, but only after you finish a large task. There are many ways to hold yourself to a schedule, so think of ways that will work for you.⁷

⁶ Berkeley University of California, Career Center, “Tips for Internship Success”, <https://career.berkeley.edu/Internships/IntTips>

⁷ C. Jackson, “6 Ways to Stay Productive During a Remote Internship”, (July 20, 2017), <https://www.wayup.com/guide/community/contributor-productive-remote-internship-chelsea-jackson/>

4. Check-in with your supervisor regularly

While a regular, weekly check-in is always beneficial and recommended, it takes on a higher level of importance when work is remote. You might consider sending your supervisor an agenda prior to the meeting, in which you provide a brief update on your current assignments, seek clarification on any pending matters, and ask for feedback.⁸

At the same time, you must be sensitive to the fact that your supervisor has competing demands on her/his time, and may not be able to meet with you as regularly as would be optimal. Part of developing a professional identity is learning to balance your need for supervision and your supervisor's other priorities.

5. Seek Clarification

For the most part, you may want to rely on the weekly check-in to seek clarification. Subsequently, if you are in dire need to seek clarification, we recommend that you prepare specific questions ahead of time. In your email, be sure to remind your supervisor of the assignment you are working on, and share the ways you have attempted to address the question or issue that you have. See Attachment.

6. Be Professional

During your summer internship, you will develop your own sense of professionalism.⁹ You will learn by observation, practice and reflection, and you will begin to exercise independent professional judgment. Some organizations have summer practice manuals. For those that don't, here are some tips:

Meet deadlines: You are expected to meet all client and case-related deadlines. If you cannot meet a particular deadline, be sure to alert your supervisor with sufficient notice prior to the deadline (i.e., more significant tasks/deadlines require greater notice).

Be on time: This means you are ready and available to begin work at or before the designated time, and that you remain ready and available throughout the duration of your scheduled time. If you cannot be on time, let your supervisor know at the earliest possible time prior to the scheduled activity.

Respond promptly: You are expected to check your email, voicemail, and mailbox and respond to messages promptly. Alert your supervisor or other relevant staff if you are going to be gone during regularly scheduled hours and indicate how you can be reached.

⁸ A. Pei, "5 Tips for Making the Most of Your Remote Internship", (March 30, 2020),

<https://www.hercampus.com/money-career/6-ways-rock-remote-internship>

⁹ J. Maio, "10 Reasons Why an Internship is Important to all Students", as cited from:

<https://blog.suny.edu/2018/06/10-reasons-why-an-internship-is-important-to-all-students/>



Submit quality work: You should spell-check and proofread all drafts and finished work assignments.

Maintain professional boundaries with clients: Setting professional boundaries with clients is subjective and can be complex and difficult. Talk with your supervisor and colleagues whenever you have questions or concerns about your professional relationship with clients.

7. Sustain and cultivate your network. Take some time to network with attorneys. Informational interviewing is a way for you to meet with attorneys and learn about their day-to-day practice, and how their careers developed. Informational interviews are valuable tools in developing your professional network.¹⁰

Networking Idea: One simple way to approach networking is to make a list of lawyers that you'd like to get to know better and reach out to them on social media such as Linked In. Make it a goal to reach out to 5-10 people a week on LinkedIn – either share an article they have authored, comment on a status update they've shared, or send them a note with a video meeting request, or a request to connect.¹¹

8. Explore Professional Development Opportunities

Replace live training with webinars. When in-person professional development events are canceled, look for online options instead. Many organizations offer webinars or pre-recorded sessions online—spend the time you had set aside for a conference or training session seeking out digital resources.

- NYC City Bar Student Membership offers opportunities to enhance your skills and to explore all of the possibilities the profession has to offer through online mentoring, presentations, and job postings. For more information, see: https://services.nycbar.org/Members/CreateAccount?utm_source=nycbar&utm_medium=join-renew&utm_campaign=join%20now
- The Philadelphia Bar Association's Public Interest Section, Law School Outreach Committee, hosts the "Summer Brown Bag Lunch Series," most Thursdays from

¹⁰ M. Villano, "Experienced Workers Find Internships to Diversify Skills During a Layoff and Enhance their Careers, Monster, as cited from: <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/adult-internships>

¹¹ L. Griffiths, "Law Students Can Still Network During the Coronavirus Outbreak", (March 31, 2020), <https://abaforlawstudents.com/2020/03/31/law-students-can-still-network-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/>



12:00 to 1:30 p.m. at the Philadelphia Bar Association. These free programs provide an opportunity for summer law student interns to meet public interest attorneys who are leaders in their field and learn about different types of public interest practice and fellowship opportunities in the greater Philadelphia area. You will receive an invitation to join this series.

- American Constitution Society: ASC provides students with career development, mentoring, and job banks, through a diverse nationwide network of progressive lawyers, law students, judges, scholars, and many others protecting our democracy and the public interest and for improving people's lives. www.acslaw.org.
- National Lawyers Guild: Students who are interested in progressive lawyeringshould consider joining the National Lawyers Guild. As a member, you will have access to webinars, member-only email lists, job postings, and the opportunity to network with the national community. www.nlg.org.