

DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL
INTERNSHIP MODEL AND
ITS SUPPORT SYSTEM
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

DIM-4-HE

INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS

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Digital Internship Model

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is a resource for students focused on practical advice to a successful and effective internship. It provides a brief overview of steps to be taken in the course of internship at three stages of internship: before, during and after the

internship. Aspects of digital form of internship are specifically outlined. It can be used as a supplementary material to resources provided by your higher education institution.

THE ROLE OF INTERNSHIP IN BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL

An internship is a limited period of practical training carried out by a student within a company or organisation. Internship is used for a wide range of placements in businesses, non-profit organisations and government agencies since organisations also benefit from involving interns.

Internship provides students with opportunities to:

- apply theoretical knowledge in real world;
- develop professional skills and competences and confidence;
- prepare for full-time work following graduation;
- gain relevant skills and experience in a particular field;
- learn more about the company and the industry;
- determine whether a student still has an interest in that field after the real-life experience;
- build a professional network for future employment opportunities.

WHAT IS DIGITAL INTERNSHIP

Digital (also called “virtual” or “remote”) internship provides an opportunity to gain professional experience at local or international level without the conventional requirement of being physically present in an office. It allows students to work for organisations that they might not otherwise have access to because of geographical distance.

Digital internships are like traditional ones in that students still have work tasks to do, a supervisor to report to and communication with the team.

How is a digital internship different from a traditional internship?

- **Environment:** An in-person internship requires students to travel to an office, store, warehouse or other company location, whereas they can do a digital internship in home, dormitory or other space.
- **Communications:** With a digital internship, students conduct most business by email, online chat, video conferences or by phone.
- **Work hours:** An in-person internship typically follows a standard business workweek, like Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm, for example. With a digital internship, students often have more control over creating a flexible schedule.
- **Relationship building:** Both internship types let interns build connections with colleagues, clients, fellow interns and customers, though it can be more challenging through a digital one. Face-to-face connections may work better for one person, however, digital tools provide many ways to connect online, too.

Hybrid internship combines elements of both virtual and in person work experience or a blend of in person and virtual synchronous engagement combined with asynchronous independently managed activity.

CHALLENGES TO BE AWARE OF WITH A DIGITAL INTERNSHIP

There might be a lack of structure and support:

An internship can become like a mentorship if your boss excels at providing structured supervision and support. You probably won't get that same feeling of having been mentored if you're communicating only by email, zoom, and phone.

There might be less job training and guidance:

Similarly, you may get less training on and guidance about the duties of the job from your boss and colleagues at a remote internship than you would if you could see them face-to-face.

You won't experience the organization's environment or the satisfaction of building relationships:

The drawbacks of online internships include the lack of in-person relationship building, immersion in the physical and cultural spaces of a firm or organization, and fewer opportunities to engage in the ad hoc interaction that typically arise during an on-site experience.

You will have to be more self-motivating: Without an in-the-flesh boss to answer to, you will have to muster the motivation from within to do your job.

DIGITAL INTERNSHIP MODEL

This model can be easily used in both in-person, digital or hybrid internship since it contains all the main elements of any internship and stresses the elements that are especially important for internship in the digital or hybrid form:

STUDENT

BEFORE THE INTERNSHIP

1. Introducing oneself to internship requirements
2. Finding the receiving organisation
3. Defining one's internship objectives
4. Establishing contact with supervisor/s
5. Having the initial meeting with supervisor/s
6. Establishing a workspace

DURING THE INTERNSHIP

1. Carrying out work tasks
2. Regular and productive communication with supervisors and receiving feedback
3. Communicating with other interns/students
4. Integrating into the organisation
5. Working on the materials to be submitted after the internship

AFTER THE INTERNSHIP

1. Finishing and submitting the internship report
2. Self-assessment of performance and progress in the internship
3. Receiving summative feedback from supervisors



Digital Internship Model

1. PREPARATION FOR THE INTERNSHIP

Preparation for the internship is very important for its successful start and proceeding. It will help you to stay focused and productive during the internship and have productive communication with your supervisors. Technological readiness is crucial in the case of a digital or hybrid internship model – it involves agreeing on ICT technologies needed for communication and for performing the work tasks in an effective manner.

The main steps you should take before the internship:

- Introduce yourself to internship requirements set by higher education institution (HEI)
- Find and/or decide on the receiving organisation
- Define your internship objectives
- Start to build relationships with your supervisors
- Have initial meeting with your supervisors
- Establish a dedicated workspace (in case of digital or hybrid internship)

1.1. INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Explore all the available information about the internship – be it documents or other resources provided by HEI. It is important that you know the objectives, duration, deliverables of the internship as well as your responsibilities as an intern. Do not hesitate to ask employees from HEI any questions important to prepare for an internship.

1.2. PREPARE MATERIALS FOR INTERNSHIP

Some HEIs provide to students the list of organisations ready to receive interns, however, if that is not the case, you will have to devote time to look for an internship site that can provide an intern-

ship that is interesting and valuable to you. You should begin your search early and use every resource to find a suitable internship site.

Internship search strategies

Leverage your network: talk to friends and family members with similar career interests for potential internship sites; possibly, former employers,

mentors, and coaches can also provide valuable advice; additionally, HEI faculty and administrators can provide connections.

Use Internship Search Sites at local level: organisations which are interested in receiving interns often provide information about it on sites devoted particularly for internships.

Contact local companies or businesses: many local companies and businesses offer internships with hidden benefits; you might want to contact some local organisation that you are interested in for an internship.

Use internship search sites at international level: there are companies which are open to receiving interns from other countries; web search will

provide you with information about these opportunities; you will have to find out if an organisation provides internship in virtual/remot form. See the section at the end of this booklet about resources where to look for international internships: [RESOURCES TO FIND INTERNSHIP IN GLOBAL COMPANIES](#).

Use Job Search Sites: job search sites are also a good resource for finding internship opportunities; these sites allow you to narrow your scope based on criteria such as industry or field, location, and type of internship.

Getting an internship

Getting an internship requires you to plan and navigate the application process carefully. Think about strengthening your resume, cover letters, and professional portfolio.

Apply early and widely: internship opportunities can be highly competitive, so apply early to a variety of positions; submitting a well-crafted application before the deadline offers potential employers a positive first impression.

Strengthen your resume: building an effective resume takes time and planning; try to make it professional, include specific details that will appeal to the company you want to intern at, don't hesitate to showcase your accomplishments, underscore personal attributes and activities that highlight individual characteristics.

Write a unique cover letter: the cover letter for an internship offers applicants a chance to highlight the personal, professional, and academic

attributes that make them a valuable intern and potential future employee.

Build and attach a portfolio (if needed): purpose of a portfolio is to provide concrete evidence of your skills, abilities and achievements. Besides, it shows the prospective employer that you have been keeping a track record and that you are organized. In the portfolio, compile your academic achievements, work experience, highlights from extra-curricular activities, and also include volunteering experiences and projects that you have done. You can borrow some tips for making portfolio here: [Create a professional portfolio for job applications | Help Centre | The Open University](#)

Prepare for an interview: interview is often the final step in securing an internship. During an interview, try to display both professionalism and a knowledge of the position, organisation, and mission. Don't hesitate to ask questions in case interviewers give you time for it.

1.3. DEFINE YOUR INTERNSHIP OBJECTIVES

An intentional focus on student learning is what distinguishes internships from jobs. As an intern, you should consider yourself a learner first and a contributor second, regardless of whether you are earning credit associated with your internship. To get the most out of your internship, set 3 to 5 learning or performance objectives and review them with your supervisor before, during, and at the end of your internship. If HEI provides detailed internship objectives in internship documentation, you might leave them as they are. However, you might want to set some additional objectives that are personally important to you. Also, if HEI provides rather general internship goals, you have a chance to define more specific objectives.

IMPORTANCE

Creating learning objectives:

- Signals that you are invested in the experience.
- Helps ensure everybody is on the same page, resulting in a better experience for all.
- Helps you develop and demonstrate important professional skills such as prioritizing, action-planning, and accountability.
- Most importantly, helps set the stage for maximum intern learning.

FOCUS AREAS

Objectives can focus on different areas:

- **Skill** development
- **Knowledge** acquisition
- **Personal/professional** development

SMART OBJECTIVES

Effective objectives share some commonalities:

- **S** – Specific
- **M** – Measurable
- **A** – Action-oriented
- **R** – Relevant
- **T** – Time-oriented

Examples of SMART objectives:

- > By the middle of my internship, I will be able to **write a one-page long press release** using AP style.
- > By July 30th, I will be able to **troubleshoot Microsoft Excel questions** with 95% accuracy.
- > By week 5, I will be able to identify **3 career paths** in this field & **1 way to learn about each.**

Smart objective's prompts:

- What do you **specifically** hope to accomplish?
- How will you **measure** your progress towards this objective?
- What **actions** will you take to achieve this objective?
- How is this objective **relevant** to your internship, academic interests, and/or career aspirations?
- What is your **timeline** for meeting this objective?

TIPS

Objective-setting caveats:

- Try to **avoid** broad objective like “understand” or “learn” because they cannot be easily measured.
- **Three** objectives is typically sufficient for a quarter-long internship.
- Writing SMART objectives may require several feedback and revision loops.

Objective-setting is a process:

- **Before the internship starts**, think of a few potential learning objectives and to flesh out their objectives in writing.
- **Present your objectives to your supervisor(s)** and receive their opinion.
- **When the internship starts**, review learning objectives.
- **After a few weeks**, talk to your supervisor about how you feel you are progressing towards your learning objectives, what action plan you have in place to achieve them, and how you might want to modify your original objectives.

- At the **end of the internship**, review your progress towards stated learning objectives as part of a your self-assessment.

Advice from interns:

- “Setting very **specific** objectives is important; when objectives are vague, they can seem daunting.”
- “It is okay to **modify** your objectives.”
- “**Share** your objectives with someone who can keep you accountable to it.”

Examples of specific learning objectives in digital internship:

- Acquire hands-on experience and demonstrate skills of working in a virtual team.
- Explore and recognize the different information acquisition styles and preferred information handling strategies of virtual team members.
- Use the diverse working styles and traits of virtual team members to successfully collaborate in virtual environments.
- Explore effective general learning strategies and those applicable specifically to virtual learning environments.
- Carry out self-directed learning and learning in an online environment.
- Recognize how various learning approaches and strategies have direct workplace application.

1.4. CONTACT YOUR SUPERVISORS

Before the internship starts, interns usually are assigned to two supervisors – one from the higher education institution (HEI) and one – from the receiving organisation. In special cases, interns have only one supervisor – either in HEI or in the receiving organisation. Supervisors are sometimes called mentors or tutors.

Intern’s supervisor in the receiving organisation is one of the key persons in the internship. They play a vital role by giving work tasks, providing feedback, support and guidance to an intern as they transition from student to independent competent professional.

You should contact your supervisors before the internship starts (in some cases, supervisors might be the first who initiate the contact). It might involve sending him/her an introductory email. It is important that the supervisor from the receiving organisation receives the main information about you and the internship program before the internship starts ([you might want to use the sample of introductory email to the supervisor in the receiving organisation](#)).

1.5. HAVE THE INITIAL MEETING WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR(S)

Qualitative internship should be subject to an initial meeting between the supervisor from the receiving organisation and the student before the internship. It is an opportunity for detailed discussion of supervisor's and your expectations. Initial connection that you and the supervisor make sets the tone for the remainder of the relationship. If possible, try to set this meeting as face-to-face communication (online or in-person). Of course, contacting your supervisor from HEI before the internship is also useful, but, most probably, this meeting will not be so extended.

During the initial meeting with supervisors:

- Agree on the objectives of the internship
- Agree on the conditions of communication during the internship
- Receive basic information about the organisation (with supervisor from the receiving organisation)
- Receive basic information about working conditions (with supervisor from the receiving organisation)

Detailed explanation about the four points mentioned above:

Agree on the objectives of the internship.

The success of the internship and its smooth proceeding depends on the joint understanding of internship objectives by you and by the supervisor. Introduce the supervisor from the receiving organisation to your internship objectives (formal and/or personal). You and supervisor should agree on these objectives (optimally – 3) and be open to reviewing and assessing them during the internship, and document them before the internship starts.

Agree on the conditions of communication during the internship.

Regular communication is critical for the success of internships and digital internships in particular. You and your supervisors should agree on the conditions of regular (scheduled) communication and communication outside the scheduled meetings.

The frequency and channels of regular communication

Ask your supervisors how they prefer to communicate. It is very important that you can agree on regular face-to-face communication (video conferences or in person meetings). Make sure that you can use an online platform for video conferences that is available both to you and to supervisors. Ask your supervisor which platform for online collaboration you should utilize for video conferencing, chatting, scheduling, and project management. Coordinate with your supervisor on any training needs for these platforms.

Email is also a good channel of communication. You might agree with supervisor(s) that you send weekly email recaps of your progress. If a supervisor prefers phone calls, schedule regular phone calls with them.

Frequency of communication. It is recommended to schedule at least weekly face-to-face meetings (online or in-person) with a supervisor from the receiving organisation. Consider setting up a meeting at the same time each week so that you can monitor your progress, discuss on-going tasks, and keep your site supervisor up-to-date, receive support and answers to your questions. Frequency of meetings with a supervisor from HEI depend on your agreement, usually these are biweekly or less frequent meetings.

Communication apart from the regular meetings

It will be needed if you have questions to the supervisor or issues to be resolved as soon as possible. Ask supervisors which are the most appropriate channels to reach them outside regular scheduled communication and the terms under which they will be able to engage (for example, you might agree that if sudden questions arise, you contact supervisor in *WhatsApp* Chat or by e-mail and they will be able to reply in the next work day).

Technological resources for online communication:

- Face to Face Communication – *Zoom, MS Teams, FaceTime, GoToMeeting, WebEx, Zoho Meetings, WhatsApp*, etc.
- Other communication tools – Slack, Email, Instant Messenger, WhatsApp Chat, etc.

Receive basic information about the organisation.

During the initial meeting with the supervisor from the receiving organisation you should ask about the organisation and about the resources where you could find out more about it or about its particular entity (e.g., department). Ask a supervisor if it is possible to get acquainted with other employees, especially those with whom you might be in closer collaboration during the internship. If meeting other employees is impossible, ask the supervisor at least the names and positions of employees you will be in contact with during the internship.

In general, before the internship it is recommended to learn about:

- Products or services provided by organisation
- History, mission and objectives of organisation
- Structure of organisation (e.g., organisational chart)
- Employees or team with whom you will collaborate
- Resources where you can find out more about the organisation
- Next formal or informal team meeting in an organisation where you need or may participate

Receive basic information about working conditions.

Work environment, work regulations and technological issues should be the topics on which you preferably need to receive information from the supervisor before the internship. Information about the digital tools that you will need to carry out work tasks is very important, and, possibly, you will have to acquire knowledge about certain IT tools or programs before the internship – do not hesitate to ask your supervisor about the ways to do it. Sometimes, in larger organisations, an IT team member is assigned to an intern, someone who will be responsible for ensuring you have quick access to all the resources you need as soon as you start.

In general, before the internship it is recommended to learn about:

- Regulations of work safety
- Data protection rules
- Code of ethics
- Security or confidentiality issues that you should be aware of
- Schedule of working day and working hours
- Internal communication channels in organisation
- Communication etiquette for videoconferences, phone, email etc.
- Digital tools, programs and networks used in organisation needed for you to carry out work tasks.

1.6. ESTABLISH A WORKSPACE

Before the internship starts, establish a workspace away from distractions and organise your desk with necessary supplies.

- **Designate a location as your primary workspace.** This could be a home office, bedroom, or dining room table. It also helps to have a back-up location, in case your primary workspace becomes unavailable. The criteria for determining an optimal workspace is a distraction-free area where you can quietly focus on your work and take meetings. Most probably, you will have to discuss work arrangements with anyone you live with to avoid interruptions and distractions during the workday.
- **Prepare technology for work.** Technological readiness for internship means providing appropriate software and hardware. By checking your technological capacity before your first day, you help ensure that the first few days on the job are stress-free from technological surprises.

If you are using a personal computer for your internship, take advice from your supervisor from the receiving organisation or their IT department to determine that you have all appropriate software and ensure that your computer has the necessary computing capabilities. You may also have to submit a report detailing your computer's and WiFi security protocols. Make sure you have a stable connection to the internet with speeds of at least 25Mbps and a webcam. A microphone/headset combination will alleviate background noise and improve the clarity of your conversations in videoconferences. You might want to look into guides for using platform for videoconferences on Youtube.

If a computer is provided by the receiving organisation, make sure you set aside some time to ensure that the computer is set up properly and is ready for your first day of work. This is also an opportunity to refresh yourself on the software you will be using. Even if you feel technologically experienced it is still important to test the provided technology as it can be a different version from what you are accustomed to. Companies like [SkillShare](#) and [Coursera](#) provide a wide variety of training videos for free.

2. DURING THE INTERNSHIP

In this stage, the focus is on the development of your professional skills through work tasks assigned to you by the supervisor in the receiving organisation. Most interns are also required by HEI

to write an internship diary. Constant communication and feedback between you and your supervisor in the receiving organisation is the key for the success of an internship, especially – digital internship.

General success strategies during digital internship

Make a schedule. Set regular hours or a routine. Prepare for each workday as if you were going to an office such as make a daily to-do list including meetings to stay on task. One of the most difficult parts about a digital internship is the unstructured time. Making a daily schedule will allow you to plan out when you're going to work on assignments so that you're always on top of your work. Choose the tool that will help you to plan the time (paper planner, google calendar etc.).

Set goals every day or every week. This will give you the opportunity to see your progression over a period of time. Whether it's short term or long-term, setting goals allows you to push yourself in a positive direction during digital internships. It also helps you keep track of your progress, so you'll know if there's ever a time when you need to push yourself more.

Take initiative. When you know something needs to be done, do it before you're asked. Supervisors will appreciate your taking initiative and showing that you can do things without being told to. The goal of an internship is to learn, so take advantage of all of the opportunities that you can. If you see an opportunity to work on a new kind of project or to listen in on a call with the CEO, don't be afraid to ask about it. Not only should you start projects before you're asked to, but don't be afraid to ask for new tasks and come up with original ideas as well. Try asking "what would you like me to work on if I finish this portion of the work or this project ahead of time?".

Stay in contact. Clarify tasks and projects as needed. Contact the supervisor right away if you feel that you need support in a work task. Ask about people involved in the project or people who may be important sources of information to complete the project.

Ask for feedback. As an intern, it's important to show enthusiasm and willingness to learn. Ask clarifying questions whenever you need to do so. Asking for feedback consistently makes it apparent that you care about the work you are doing and you want to improve. It can be tough to hear improvements your supervisor would like you to make, but in the long run you'll be a better intern and employee.

Track your progress. Keep a log of your work – tasks completed, accomplishments – to share with your supervisor. This will also come in handy when you update your resume.

Be patient. This may be the organisation's first time having a (digital) internship as well. There will likely be some bumps along the way.

Socialize. Use opportunities to communicate with your co-workers and other interns virtually or in-person. Apart from that, prioritize your time with family and friends outside of work if your internship is virtual or hybrid. These are people who can satisfy your social needs and offset your "alone time" while working virtually. Try to make plans in the evenings and on weekends. It doesn't even have to be in-person if that's not possible; phone calls and Zoom sessions can be just as effective.

The main activities of interns during the internship usually are:

- Carrying out work tasks
- Regular and productive communication with supervisors and receiving feedback
- Communicating with other interns/students
- Integrating into the organisation
- Working on the materials that you will have to submit after the internship

2.1. CARRY OUT WORK TASKS INDIVIDUALLY OR IN A TEAM

Carrying out the work tasks assigned by the supervisor in the receiving organisation is one of the main activities during the internship. Work tasks provide you opportunities to learn and develop professional skills and competencies.

When the supervisor assigns you a work task, make sure that you understood:

- what is the outcome of the task (e.g., a list composed; an architectural sketch drawn; a number of customers informed about the sales campaign)
- what is the deadline for delivery of the task
- how to carry out the task, what stages it has
- what are the tools/programs for carrying out the task and which platforms should be used for collaboration, review, and delivery of work such as a shared network folder
- what is your level of autonomy in carrying out the task (which parts of tasks you can do with/without supervision and in which you can generate his own solutions and ideas)
- where to look for support if needed to carry out the task (e.g., whom you can ask for advice, where you can find additional information and instructions etc.)
- which employees you have to collaborate with if it is a team work and how to contact them

2.2. HAVE REGULAR AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH SUPERVISORS AND RECEIVE FEEDBACK

Regular face-to-face meetings with your supervisor are important to monitor your progress.

The more your supervisor is prepared for such formal or semi-formal meetings, the better, so provide the supervisor with the outline and required materials prior to the actual meeting and have an

agenda ready with a list of items you would like to discuss during the meeting. Prioritize topics that are time sensitive or urgent to ensure you address those first. Try to discuss all the important issues face to face with your supervisor, as electronic means of communication are often inadequate.

You can vary the ways of communication with your supervisor. Informal, spontaneous communication plays an important role in building rela-

tionships and establishing trust, and helps the student and the supervisor to get to know each other better.

Criteria of effective communication

- Clarity (understandable message)
- Conciseness (straight and short message; no wordiness, empty phrases, and redundancies)
- Correctness (accurate, fact-based and grammatically correct information)
- Completeness (message reveals the whole picture and leaves no guesswork)
- Coherence (logical, organized and relevant information, smoothly presented)
- Consideration (before speaking, consider your words and their potential effects on the listener).
- Courtesy (avoid inappropriate jokes, insults, or an aggressive tone)
- Schedule. If you don't have this set up already, propose regularly scheduled meetings or "check-ins" with your supervisor on a biweekly or weekly basis.
- Be candid and straightforward. If you are running into a roadblock or are unsure of next steps, you should ask those questions. A good supervisor will provide you with guidance, besides, timely informing about problems is better than letting supervisor know about problems after a deadline.
- Get to know your supervisor. Try to understand your supervisor's work-style, preferences in communication (How do they prefer to communicate? When is a good time to have meetings with them?). Take the time to learn from them, share your goals with them, and ask questions
- Use proper communication channels (SMS alert system, email, intranet, or instant messaging application etc.) and tools. A microphone/headset combination will alleviate background noise and improve the clarity of your conversations. More information can be found in the [Student Guide to Using Zoom](#).
- See more tips for online communication in section [COMMUNICATION IN INTERNSHIP](#)

Best practices for communicating with your supervisor

- Be an attentive and engaged listener. Write down supervisor's suggestions or feedback, and reflect on how you can incorporate it into your work.
- Come prepared with talking points. Jot down some updates you have, questions you want to ask, and be prepared to write down any requests or tasks that they may have for you.

Asking for and receiving feedback

Feedback is:

- information about how one is doing in effort to reach a goal;
- both giving and receiving information;
- helpful for the intern and the supervisor to assess and adjust internship objectives, work tasks and workload.

An internship is an opportunity to learn. Your supervisor does not expect you to already know all the answers. Encourage your supervisor to provide feedback after an assignment so they know you're interested in growing. You can initiate the conversation by saying something like this: "I would love to make the most of my internship, and in doing so, I would appreciate any thoughts or advice you have on what I could be doing better."

Not everyone feels comfortable giving regular feedback. If the supervisor does not provide feedback, request feedback no later than 3 or 4 weeks into the position to make sure you're on the right track.

Feedback is effective when you:

- listen and accept the feedback as genuine and helpful
- give the feedback serious thought and decide the consequences of changing or not changing
- respond and engage in a dialogue

Tips for receiving feedback

Have an Open Mind – constructive criticism is not intended to bring you down, but rather to challenge you to develop and grow into a successful young professional. Regardless of the tone it is delivered in, focus on the words and the specifics of what is being said. Whether you agree or disagree with the feedback, thank supervisors for sharing their insight with you.

Find a balance between taking constructive criticism and standing your ground – your supervisor will appreciate your ability to respond well to constructive criticism. On the other hand, if you are confident in your strengths, don't be afraid to express it. Asking for too much feedback also is not optimal because constantly asking for approval can reflect insecurity and lack of self-sufficiency. If you start to see feedback as 'affirmation' or you notice that the feedback is no longer instructive, it is a sign that you are given too much feedback.

Communicate Clear Action Steps – once you have received the feedback, verbally affirm that you are going to use it to improve your performance. Thank your supervisor for the feedback

and communicate some action steps on what you could do immediately to implement the advice that you are given. This will show that you are truly invested in your development and will increase your trust level with your supervisor to have more conversations about your growth.

Keep notes of the feedback you receive – treat the notes like a commitment to yourself to change and improve. Notes are also useful because you can come back to them in the future and see your progress.

Follow through on your action steps. This will show that you have a high degree of integrity, which is always a trait that employers are looking for in future hires. Make a commitment to get back to the supervisor later regarding the feedback when you have created some changes using it. For example, a week or a month later, you notice improvements; you can send your supervisor a message saying "Thank you for the advice. I changed my approach as you recommended and I can already see great results. Thanks so much for your help." (Schwartz, 2017).

2.3. INTEGRATE INTO THE RECEIVING ORGANISATION

As much as the internship context allows, try to integrate into the organisation's work culture and interact with other employees not only in formal work-related projects, tasks and staff meetings (through videoconference or in-person), but also in informal contexts.

In digital internship or hybrid internship, one of the biggest challenges for interns can be the lack of face-to-face socialization. Even if you'll never meet your coworkers in person, it's important to connect with them on a professional and personal level.

Tips for socialisation with co-workers:

- Ask for a mentor at work – someone besides your supervisor who you can go to with questions and who you can chat with and learn from.
- Make the most of your meetings with your supervisor and your team. Use video resources as much as possible and don't be afraid to ask questions and show interest in their opinion.
- Ask your supervisor if there are any virtual events for their employees to connect, such as virtual coffee breaks, happy hours, game nights, etc. If not, you can suggest or organize something.

Important caveat: If you discover that you are interning in an environment where you cannot be yourself, where you are consistently shot down, demeaned, or harshly and personally critiqued, think about whether the internship is worth continuing, and very hard about accepting any job offers the company might extend at your internship's conclusion.

2.4. BE IN CONTACT WITH OTHER INTERNS

Apart from communicating with your supervisor and co-workers, you should have a positive and supportive relationship with your fellow interns. For example, you might be active in group chat where you can share your internship experience, to address problems and suggest solutions. If there are other interns in the receiving organisation, it is also very useful to stay in contact with them both within working time and outside it.

2.5. WORK ON THE MATERIALS THAT YOU WILL HAVE TO SUBMIT AFTER THE INTERNSHIP

Gradually develop materials (e.g., internship report, internship diary, internship portfolio etc.) that you will have to submit for evaluation after the internship. When preparing your report, be aware of any confidentiality or non-disclosure agreements you may have agreed on with the receiving organisation (e.g., employers may ask interns to sign confidentiality statements about what information you may disclose in your internship report and elsewhere). If this is the case, individuals and business partners may be described rather than named, and projects may be recounted in general terms rather than specific details.

Make sure that you find time in the midst of carrying out work tasks to work on the deliverable of the internship since leaving it to the last moment can cause stress. Do not hesitate to ask for advice from your supervisor from HEI if questions arise about the final report or other materials.

3. FINISHING THE INTERNSHIP

Writing the internship report and receiving the evaluation of your performance and progress are the central themes after the internship. It is important for you to receive summative feedback and evaluation from supervisors for your further professional development. At this stage, often interns also do self-assessment of their performance during internship.

1. Prepare the internship report

in accordance with requirements set by HEI. Make sure you read all the documentation regarding the structure and amount of the report. Seek advice from your supervisors if needed.

2. Evaluate your performance and progress.

It may consist of:

- filling in the self-assessment form provided by HEI; different HEI might define different evaluation criteria; your self-assessment might be taken into consideration when assigning a final grade about your internship.
- evaluating to what degree your internship objectives that you and supervisor defined before the internship have been accomplished.

3. Meet your supervisor from the receiving organisation

- thank your supervisor for the opportunity and let him know what you learned from the experience
- ask for/receive their summative feedback about your performance and growth, about what you did well and where you can improve
- discuss if the the internship objectives have been accomplished
- if you would like to eventually work for the organization, let your supervisor know that you would be interested should a position become available
- ask for advice they may have regarding pursuing a career in the field or if they have any recommendations of people you might connect with regarding your career interests. You can also ask if your supervisor would be willing to serve as a professional reference or willing to write a recommendation on your LinkedIn profile.

COMMUNICATION IN DIGITAL INTERNSHIP

We devoted a separate section about professional communication which is a crucial point in an internship, especially – in an internship which takes place remotely or in hybrid format.

Below are some suggestions for building communication effectively throughout your internship, as well as, some guidelines around email commu-

nication. As you read through the different sections, keep in mind that communication etiquette, or what is considered appropriate communication in the workplace, may vary from organisation to organisation. The last section in this handout provides some criteria for assessing your work environment in an effort to help you determine appropriate behavior in a particular workplace.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR

Setting the Stage for Success

1. Check in with your supervisor about their expectations and immediate priorities or goals. If this information is not shared at the start of the internship, ask to set up a meeting to discuss these topics.
2. Review the specific responsibilities of your role and how your position fits into the larger organization.
3. Share with your supervisor your goals for the internship. If your goals fall outside the scope of your immediate responsibilities, ask if there would be an opportunity to incorporate these goals during the internship without taking the focus away from meeting the priorities of the organization.
4. Ask to set a regular meeting time at least once a week (30 minutes to 1 hour). Come to the meeting with agenda items. Taking an active role in your learning will impress your supervisor.
5. Ask how and when your performance will be evaluated.
6. Get to know your supervisor's communication preferences. Does your supervisor prefer email, phone, instant message, zoom or other platform call or in-person communication?

Throughout the Internship

7. When you are given a project, find out how often and in what form you should provide project updates. If needed, ask if there are samples or examples you could use as models. Also ask about deadlines.
8. Let your supervisor know you are open to feedback and would appreciate hearing when you are meeting or exceeding expectations and when you need to improve. Not everyone feels comfortable giving regular feedback. Request feedback no later than 3 or 4 weeks into the position to make sure you're on the right track.
9. If feedback given is not clear, ask for clarification. Helpful feedback is concrete, specific and actionable. It focuses on behavior and desired outcome.
10. Do your best and have a positive attitude regardless of the task. Do whatever is needed and do not assume that your education equips you with so much knowledge that executing low-level projects is beneath you. The way that you interact with your colleagues, your willingness to take on the mundane tasks, how well the job gets done – it all matters to the people around you.
11. Show your willingness to go above and beyond what is in the job description. Be proactive in asking for more projects and responsibilities. Look for opportunities to assist co-workers and volunteer for assignments that interest you.

12. Before reaching out to colleagues, let your supervisor know you would like to approach others on the team to ask if you can be of help. Your supervisor will appreciate your checking as you may have upcoming projects you are not aware of.
13. Identify your supervisors' strengths. They may serve as mentors to you in this area. No one person can mentor or coach you in every area you wish to develop. Instead, look for people in your environment who have an expertise in areas you wish to develop. Keep in mind that a mentorship is not just a formal relationship with written goals and scheduled meeting times; it can be as informal as an occasional chat or email exchange.

Ending the Internship on a Positive Note

14. If you're working on a project that extends past your last day, go the extra mile and create a status report. Your supervisor will appreciate not being left in the dark.
15. Meet with your supervisor at the end of the internship:
 - a. Thank your supervisor and colleagues for the opportunity and let them know what you learned from the experience.
 - b. If you would like to eventually work for the organization, let your supervisor know that you would be interested should a position become available.
 - c. Ask if your supervisor would be willing to serve as a professional reference.
 - d. Ask for any last feedback on what you did well and where you can improve.
 - e. Ask for advice they may have regarding pursuing a career in the field or if they have any recommendations of people you might connect with regarding your career interests.
16. If your supervisor and/or colleagues expressed positive feedback on any of your projects, ask if they would be willing to write a recommendation on your LinkedIn profile.

COMMUNICATING WITH COLLEAGUES

Setting the Stage for Success

1. If you are not introduced to colleagues in other departments by your supervisor, you might consider taking it upon yourself to introduce yourself.
2. Make one of your goals to learn specifics about your colleagues' roles and how you can work together most effectively. Prioritize those individuals you will most frequently collaborate with during the internship.

Throughout the Internship

3. Let team members know you are available to help with projects.
4. Ask colleagues for feedback based on what they have observed about your work.
5. If you have an innovative idea for overhauling a particular system in an organization, wait until you've established a credible reputation and rapport with your colleagues before proposing a major change. Be curious as to why the current system is being used. You may not realize that there are particular reasons why something is put in place. Colleagues will appreciate your effort to understand the current practice before suggesting changes. Once you earn colleague's trust, they may be more open to your suggestions.

6. Keep controversial opinions to yourself. Some matters, such as your political, religious or social views, are best kept out of the office. These discussions can be polarizing, and you run the risk of offending or alienating colleagues with your viewpoints, particularly when you are first getting to know them.

Ending the Internship on a Positive Note

7. Express appreciation through email or in person to your colleagues and thank them for the information, support and/or guidance they have provided.
8. Let colleagues know you would like to stay in touch and ask them what is the best way to do so.

Keeping in Touch

9. Connect with colleagues through LinkedIn or other professional networking platform.
10. Periodically communicate with colleagues to let them know your status or how something you learned at the internship or from them has helped you on your current internship or with a class project. Let them know if you followed up on any advice they gave you. Send articles you think might interest them. Send a note to let them know you've noticed new developments or changes with the organization (e.g., website changes, promotions).
11. Reconnect with former colleagues at professional conferences or trainings.

Tips for online communication

Email Etiquette

A great deal of communication in the workplace happens over email. Below are the top five email pet peeves:

- 1. Avoid poor grammar and spelling.**

A typo every now and then is not a big deal. However, consistent bad grammar and spelling is inexcusable. Everything you do, say and write reflects your professionalism. When people read your messages, they naturally and automatically make a judgment about you. If your writing is poor, your credibility comes under question. Read and reread your email a few times, preferably aloud, before sending.

- 2. Not knowing when to use “reply all” vs “reply.”**

Just because you were one of many recipients on a message does not mean everyone needs to hear your reply. Think carefully about who needs to see the message. Use “reply all” judiciously, rather than filling your colleagues’ inboxes with unnecessary emails.

- 3. Writing bad subject lines or not using subject lines.**

Use straightforward subject lines that reflect the true theme of the message. For day-to-day business purposes, plain and direct text works best. So rather than have a subject line that reads, “Want to pick your brain,” write, “Need your input on the X account.” Realize that many people use their e-mail as a filing system, and they rely on the subject lines to find key information later. So always write detailed subject lines, as in “PowerPoint decks on X qualitative project.” And should the email’s subject change as the conversation ensues, then change the subject line to reflect the new theme.

- 4. E-mailing complicated information.**

If you have to give someone technical, detailed or complicated information, do it

with a phone call and then send an email as a backup rather than relying solely on the e-mail communication. Email is best suited for short messages that don't require a lengthy response. If your email is more than a couple of paragraphs, pick up the phone and talk to the recipient. Additionally, if you are the recipient of a detailed message and need time to work on the reply, promptly respond with a short acknowledgment message that states, "I received your message and am working on the needed items." And if the reply requires real discussion, then pick up the phone and talk about it.

5. Having sensitive conversations via e-mail.

Sensitive and emotionally charged conversations have no place in an email. If you need to express disappointment or apologize, do it face-to-face (most preferred) or via phone. When a topic has emotion behind it, the recipient naturally escalates that emotion when reading the email. Why? Because it's virtually impossible to display emotion in an email and humans by nature tend to look for the worst in a message rather than the best.

6. Not knowing that people from different cultures may speak and write differently.

Miscommunication can easily occur because of cultural differences. Tailor your message depending on the receiver's cultural background or how well you know them. Experts in communicating cross culturally suggest that a good rule to keep in mind is that high-context cultures (Japanese, Arab, or Chinese) want to get to know you before doing business with you. Therefore, it may be common for business associates from these countries to be more personal in writing. On the other hand, people from low-context cultures (German, American, or Scandinavian) prefer to get to the point very quickly. Be sensitive to the workplace culture you are operating in when determining the tone of your email.

Etiquette during video conferences

Video calls are one of the best methods today for keeping the human element to your work. Video calls definitely help bridge the gap between remote employees and the rest of their team. In organisations, video conferences are good for small meetings and group discussions, in-depth one-on-one meetings and virtual team-building sessions.

- 1. Make sure everything works beforehand**
- 2. Be present and limit distractions**
- 3. Speak clearly**
- 4. Mute your microphone when you are not speaking.**
- 5. Dress appropriately.**
- 6. Set a decent and professional video background.**
- 7. Raise your hand, use Chat appropriately.**

Phone Etiquette

Phone calls allow for faster communication with less room for misinterpretation than emails and messenger apps. They're less stressful than a video call too since you don't need to make yourself presentable for the camera to make one.

- 1. Give the caller your complete attention. Multitasking is more apparent to the caller than you think.**
- 2. As the caller does not have the benefit of seeing your facial expression or body language, you must use your words, tone and vocal projection to convey**

RESOURCES TO FIND INTERNSHIP IN GLOBAL COMPANIES

GO OVERSEAS

<https://www.gooverseas.com/internships-abroad/online>

THE FORAGE

www.theforage.com

THE INTERN GROUP

<https://www.theinterngroup.com/destination/virtual-internships/>