Best Practices for Virtual Internships

Based upon NACE guidelines and conversations with both students and employers, UMass Amherst has put together the following list of best practices for virtual internships.

Cover the Basics

- Since virtual work can have a certain amount of “disconnect” built in, it is important to ensure the work is meaningful. This can be alleviated through providing interns work that gives them a chance to connect with and contribute to the goals of the organization.
- Find ways to immerse interns into the company culture.
- Build community by including interaction in the schedule with other interns and employees.

Manager Training

- Ensure managers are ready to manage interns on a remote basis by providing them with tools to aid in success working in a virtual world.

Mitigate Challenges

- It is best to not assume students have access to the technology and internet required to perform their job. You may want to have a conversation about this in advance to provide them the tools needed to get their job done.
- Interns working from home may not have a private space available to them for work, so please don’t misinterpret a lack of privacy as a lack of professionalism.

Keep to a Schedule

- As much as possible, set and adhere to a schedule over the course of the internship.
- The schedule does not need to be static, but students work best when they know what is expected and when.

Keep Lines of Communication Open

- Schedule regular check-ins with interns and provide ongoing feedback over the course of the internships experience.