**Ideas for Remote Placement Management**

**Project selection:**

*Importance of choosing the appropriate projects for remote students.*

"It's important to select projects which are important or notable to a large group. This ensures that many people in the organization are invested in the intern's success, and it widens the scope of available mentors who are knowledgeable about the project and can step in and help across time zones." Darren Murph, Head of Remote for [GitLab](https://about.gitlab.com/)

**Logistics and support:**

*Equipment* – laptop, wifi, etc.

*Access* - resources such as the intranet and company programs and systems. If possible, it is advisable to assign an IT team member to the placement student, someone who will be responsible for ensuring they have quick, seamless access to all the resources they need as soon as they start placement (for example, by establishing and sharing passwords in advance) and introducing them to the new tools at their disposal.

***Orientation and training* –** HR colleagues could provide students with electronic versions of important company documents that will help orient them to the company's culture and its policies and procedures, such as the team member handbook and code of conduct. Furthermore, HR colleagues could provide virtual sessions to replace orientation or mandatory training sessions that the placement student cannot attend in person.

*Build relationships with the right people quickly* - provide a list of the key people the student should connect with within their early days on placement; a mentor/buddy, key peers, and representatives from other key functions. HR colleagues could support videoconferencing meetings with all these parties ensuring they are scheduled early on in the placement. The Preceptor could v-meet (virtual meeting) daily with the student at first, and then move these check-ins to two or three times per week once a relationship is established. HR colleagues could also perform a more formal check-in at the end of the first week and the end of the first month.

**Induction:**

Includes an onboarding buddy, specific task checklists, and a team handbook to act as a resource guide for questions. Check-ins at a regular cadence, up to several times a day in the ramp-up period, to replicate an in-person experience.

**Communication used:**

It's important to set clear expectations around communication. If your team has a default mode of communication, make sure students are well informed about what channels to use and when.

How quickly are students expected to respond to messages?

What belongs in chat, and what is best for email or a video conference meeting?

Implementing a practice of asynchronous writing instead of relying entirely on video conference meetings.

Kicking off brainstorming sessions in writing or posting questions on shared documents allows team members, including students, time to think and then be less reactive and make decisions more thoughtfully.

As you integrate remote students into your team, asynchronous writing also allows for collaboration and provides written documentation of how students have made impactful contributions.

**Plan:**

Consider how you can create an online structure of support, mentorship, and ongoing learning.

Checkpoints - including regular 1:1s with their buddy, a mid-placement check-in with leadership, and an end-of-placement presentation, can be completed using video conferencing, with day-to-day work completed using chat, project management tools, and email.

Not only will these pre-determined check-ins give your student set milestones to work towards, but they will also allow students to get to know team members and leadership from afar.

Setting clear expectations about what success looks like coupled with systems to track progress.

By setting the groundwork early on with students, you can avoid micromanaging projects and instead create a culture of trust and give the team the time and space to do impactful work.

You can also consider a rotational placement that will give students insight into various aspects of your business. Keirsten Sires, a remote internship consultant and CEO of [LRT Sports](https://www.lrt-sports.com/), has utilized this model. Students go through rotations with weekly assigned projects reviewed by mentors. She stressed the need to be flexible within your structure. "Our internship looks wildly different from when we first started. You need to be dynamic with this process and get feedback. Then if something isn't working, don't try to force it."

Thank you again from the APPEL team for continuing to support pharmacy students and the APPEL programme through remote placements.

References

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