Student Guide to Remote Work Opportunities
THE BASICS

What is remote work?

Remote work is an opportunity that enables you to complete projects and collaborate with colleagues without requiring you to travel to a specific work location.

The COVID-19 pandemic required many employers to transition their teams to work from home and test the feasibility of their staff working remotely. Even before COVID-19, remote work has increased dramatically with a 159% increase over the last 12 years (flexjobs). Remote work is here to stay as GitLab finds 86% of professionals believe remote work is the future.

As remote work becomes more prevalent, it can be an option for you to explore as you search for internship or full-time opportunities. It’s important to understand that there are a wide variety of ways that remote working opportunities are designed by the employer. Some companies may be completely remote, while other companies might have a hybrid approach.

To understand the world of remote work, it is important to educate yourself about the language, skills, and knowledge of the remote work landscape.

Understanding the World of Remote Work

- The State of Remote Work in 2021 & GitLab Remote Work Report
- Workplaceless: Remote Work Dictionary & Remote Work Competency Model

Remote Job Searching Advice & Resources

- Comprehensive Guide To Finding Remote And Work From Home Jobs
- Matt Mullenweg, Ted Talk
- How to Find(and Land!) a Remote Job that’s right for you.
- 25+ Fully Remote Companies that Let You Work from Anywhere
- How to Spot and Avoid Online Job Scams
- How to Find (Remote) Work in Tech – Even During the Crisis

Prepare for Remote Work

- How to Stay Connected While Working Remotely
- Grow with Google: Remote Work
- Working From Home? 12 Guides To Help Navigate The Remote Life
- 6 Biggest Challenges of Working from Home and How to Overcome Them
- Purdue University Global’s “Working From Home: 5 Environmental Factors Affecting Your Well-Being”
- 5 Habits for Crafting the Perfect Remote Work Day
What are some of the Benefits of Remote Work Opportunities?

**Location:** Relocation can often be a limitation when searching for jobs or internships because of moving expenses, varying housing costs, family obligations, etc. Remote work can enable people to address a variety of personal and work responsibilities by eliminating basic logistical and scheduling challenges.

**Flexibility:** Remote work opportunities may offer flexibility for people to decide their own work hours based on their individual schedules. This can enable you to work at times when you’ll be most productive rather than attempting to be productive during a preset workday. You’ll want to check in with your employer to understand their approach to work hours.

**Reduced Transportation Investment:** By working remotely, you eliminate some of the monetary and time investments necessary to enable you to travel between your home and workplace. Commutes can require a significant time investment and working at home enables you to use the time previously allocated for travel for other things such as spending time with friends and family, hobbies, and exercise.

What are some of the Challenges of Remote Work Opportunities?

**Understanding Organizational Culture:** Many people rely on in person interactions with fellow employees to learn the culture of their work place. With remote work opportunities, you’re often limited in your ability to interact with your co-workers in person. To learn the organization’s culture, you’ll need to readjust your typical approach for assessing culture and be intentional about scheduling “get to know you meetings” with your new coworkers. It’s also important to be communicative when you’re feeling confused or unsure about an approach to a project or situation.

**Access to Networking:** Networking is an important component to furthering your career, but can be more difficult for people in a remote work environment. Informal Networking opportunities are often facilitated by people being in the same space at the same time and striking up a conversation. To address this challenge, some remote workers choose to work in a **coworking space** with other remote workers to facilitate a social atmosphere and informal networking.

**Distractions:** Remote work can be particularly challenging if you find it difficult to be productive without the social pressure of a physical work environment or the presence of an authority figure. It’s important for you to identify your own productivity challenges and develop solutions that will enable you to excel in your remote work opportunity.
FINDING REMOTE OPPORTUNITIES

- **Engineering Careers, by Symplicity**: As remote opportunities become more popular, you can identify remote work positions in Engineering Careers, by Symplicity by going to the Jobs section and clicking “Position Type” then selecting “Remote” as a filter.

- **Handshake**: You can also utilize the university wide job platform, Handshake, to identify remote opportunities by typing “remote” in the search field of the Handshake job board.

- **Job Boards**: To find remote work opportunities, you can utilize remote work filters on common job boards like the ones found on LinkedIn and Google Job Search Platform. But there are also job boards specific for remote opportunities. Here is a list of some of the common remote job boards: Remote in Tech Github List, The 18 Best Remote Job Boards, Remote Work Jobs Portal, Dice Remote Jobs, Parker Dewey, Remotive, Nodesk, Jobspresso, The Muse, Stack Overflow, We Work Remotely, Working Nomads, JustRemote, Pangian

- **Networking**: Connecting to people working remotely can help facilitate your understanding of the opportunities available to work remotely. Ensure your online presence is professional and use LinkedIn to identify possible contacts and request informational interviews to learn more about working virtually.

HOW DO I IDENTIFY A GOOD REMOTE WORK OPPORTUNITY?

- **Authenticity**: When applying to a position through any method, the ECRC encourages all job seekers to evaluate the full job description and research the company prior to submitting an application. ECRC advises job seekers never to disclose bank, financial or any other type of potentially sensitive personal information. If money, payment, or transactions of any type are requested as part of the application process or job itself, notify the ECRC immediately. Please reference the ECRC website to learn more about identifying fraudulent job postings.

- **Structure**: You want to pay close attention to the structure of the opportunity and whether it aligns with your career goals. Does the employer clearly identify the responsibilities for the position? Does the employer clearly state the expectations for working remotely? Are there clear metrics for determining your success in this role? Are you able to excel in a fully remote environment or would a hybrid approach work better for you?

- **Communication**: Clear communication is essential in any work environment, but especially in remote work opportunities where you might be working with people across a variety of time zones and may have to rely on asynchronous communication tools. Consequently, you’ll want to learn about how the organization facilitates communication amongst its employees. Are there technology tools in place to enable employees to easily connect with one another? If the organization has a hybrid approach to remote work, how does the organization ensure that remote and in person employees stay connected?
PREPARING FOR A REMOTE WORK OPPORTUNITY

**Dress Code:** While pajamas or workout clothes might be some of the most *comfortable* clothing, they don’t necessarily provide a productive mindset for your day. Best practice is to dress as if you were going to the office. You never know when you might need to have a last minute meeting with your team or supervisor. Business casual is always a safe bet, unless you’re giving an important presentation, and then you might want to dress up.

**Workspace:** As you select your workspace, you want to pick a place that is going to have fewer distractions and will be comfortable for you to have virtual meetings. Some popular spaces include dining room tables, living rooms, and home offices. You don’t want your team to be distracted by your model car collection or posters of all the concerts you’ve attended. You want to try to select a location for virtual meetings that has a more neutral background. If you are limited in space and can’t find a neutral background, you might consider changing the background on whatever virtual meeting tool you use.

**Productivity:** Feeling productive can be one of the greatest challenges to adapting to a remote work environment. Many people have found that setting a schedule for the day and creating structured breaks enables them to avoid burnout and measure their success each day. You could also be intentional about how you schedule your day. If you work better independently in the morning and find the afternoons tend to go on forever, then you might schedule project time for your mornings and time for meetings in the afternoon. [Trello] and [Taskboard] are free popular project management tools to help manage your productivity.

**Working Hours:** One of the positive aspects of remote work can be the freedom to set your own hours. But every organization’s culture is different. Some may still require their employees to follow the standard 8am-5pm schedule, while others may allow each employee to determine their own work schedule. You’ll want to communicate with your supervisor before your first day of work to find out what their preferences are for your work schedule.

**Communication:** Veterans of remote work often emphasize the importance of over-communication because the virtual environment can lessen your ability to communicate face to face. Over-communication means taking extra care to explain background and contextual information and providing clear action items for the other person. It also means requesting clarification on assigned tasks and projects to ensure expectations are understood and delivered. If you find it challenging to communicate this type of information concisely through email, you can always ask the other person to jump on a quick video call so you can explain the situation faster.
MAXIMIZING YOUR VIRTUAL INTERNSHIP

Networking: While you won’t be running into people in the hallways or the office kitchen, networking is still possible in virtual internships. It requires you to be more intentional about how you establish new connections. In the first couple weeks, take the initiative to get to know your co-workers by scheduling brief video meetings to introduce yourself and learn about their role. You can continue building connections within the organization by asking the people you meet with for referrals to other people in the organization that share your interests.

Feedback: Your mission in any internship is to get feedback on your strengths and what skills you need to develop further. If your manager isn’t providing feedback, it’s your responsibility to check in and ask what they think about your work performance and if there are any areas for improvement. If you were successful in your internship, submit a LinkedIn recommendation request to your supervisor to showcase the value you added during your internship.

Reflect on your experience: As working remotely increases in popularity, it may be something you want to pursue in a full-time role. A virtual internship can be a great trial run for determining if working remotely would be a good fit for your career. By reflecting throughout the experience and keeping notes, you’ll have a better sense of what you’re looking for in your next opportunity and will be better equipped to identify opportunities of interest.

Communicate: Virtual internships require you to be productive while working independently, concerns. Talk to your manager early on in your internship about their preferred communication approach if you have a question or concern.

Participate in Events: Virtual internships can limit your interactions to a set group of people; unless you take opportunities to meet people beyond that group. When you see opportunities for virtual team building or informal chats, seize those opportunities. Internships are a great way to develop social capital, but virtual internships require you to be more proactive to establish those social connections and learn more about the company culture. Events are great opportunities to find a mentor or learn about new projects and opportunities.