


NIPISSING

U N I V E R S I T Y

Experiential Learning Program for Arts & Science

Virtual Work Placement Guide Students

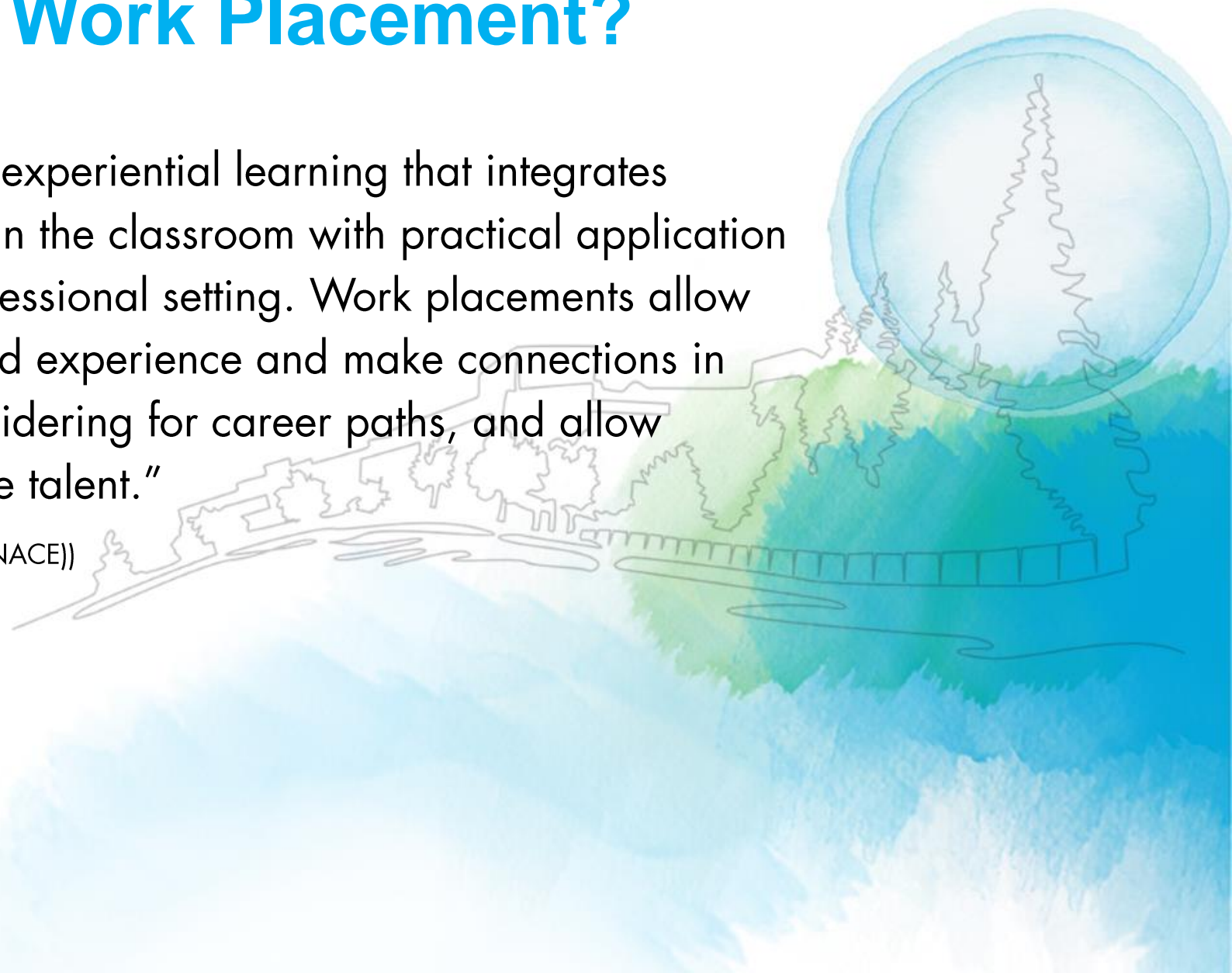


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What is an ELAS Work Placement?

A work placement is “a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Work placements allow students to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths, and allow employers to guide and evaluate talent.”

(National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE))



What is an ELAS Work Placement?

To ensure that an experience - whether it is in person or one conducted virtually - is educational, and thus eligible to be considered a legitimate work placement all the following criteria must be met:

- The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be merely to advance the employer's operations or work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
- The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
- The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
- There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
- The experience must be supervised by a professional with expertise and educational or professional background in the field.
- There is regular feedback from the experienced supervisor.
- There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

What is an ELAS Work Placement?

ELAS work placements coincide with the academic calendar typically fall within the following time frames:

- Fall Semester (September - December)
- Spring Semester (January- April)
- Summer Semester (May-August)

Placement blocks are either 30 or 60-hours throughout the semester. Students can work more or fewer hours, but 30 is the minimum number of hours needed to complete an ELAS placement.

What is an ELAS Work Placement?

ELAS placements provide many benefits. A few of those employer benefits include:

- Short-term support without a long-term commitment
- Management experience for supervisors/mentors who direct the students' work activities
- Opportunity to evaluate student job candidates before offering permanent employment
- The best source of new permanent employees
- Higher retention rates for employees with company work placement experience
- Source of new ideas and a fresh approach to problem-solving, critical thinking, communications, etc.
- Highly enthusiastic, capable, and motivated students
- Company name recognition and increased visibility on-campus



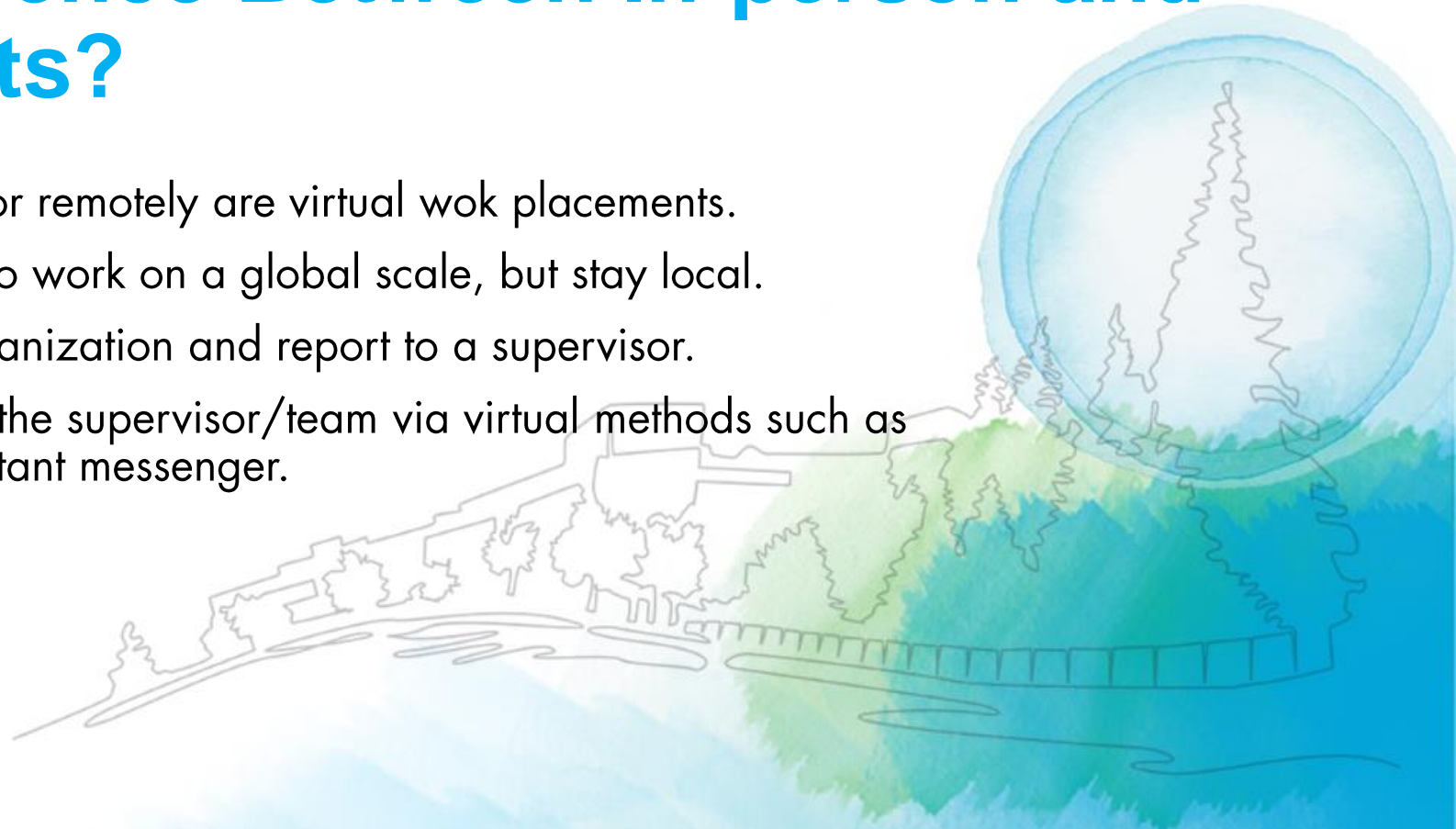
What is the Difference Between In-person and Virtual Placements?

Work placements performed online, or remotely are virtual work placements.

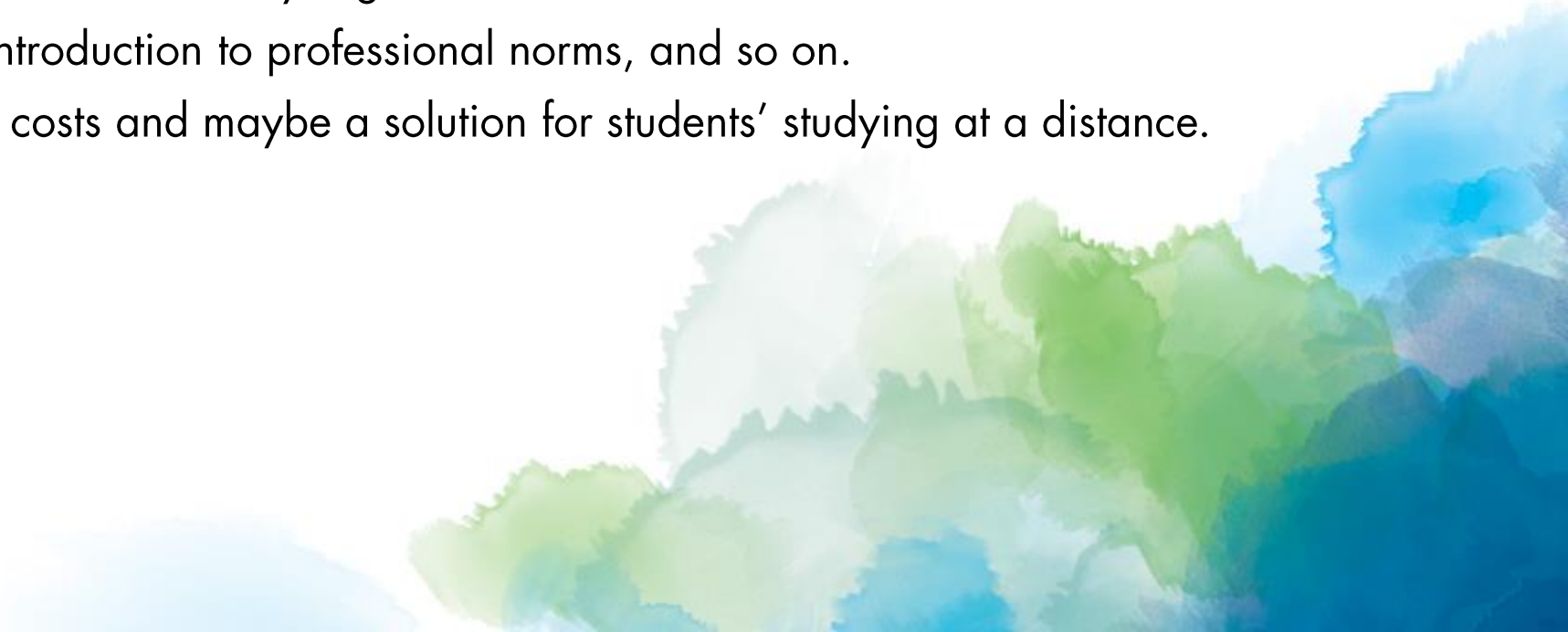
Virtual placements allow the student to work on a global scale, but stay local.

They are placed with an NBDCC organization and report to a supervisor.

They are also in regular contact with the supervisor/team via virtual methods such as video call, phone call, email, and instant messenger.

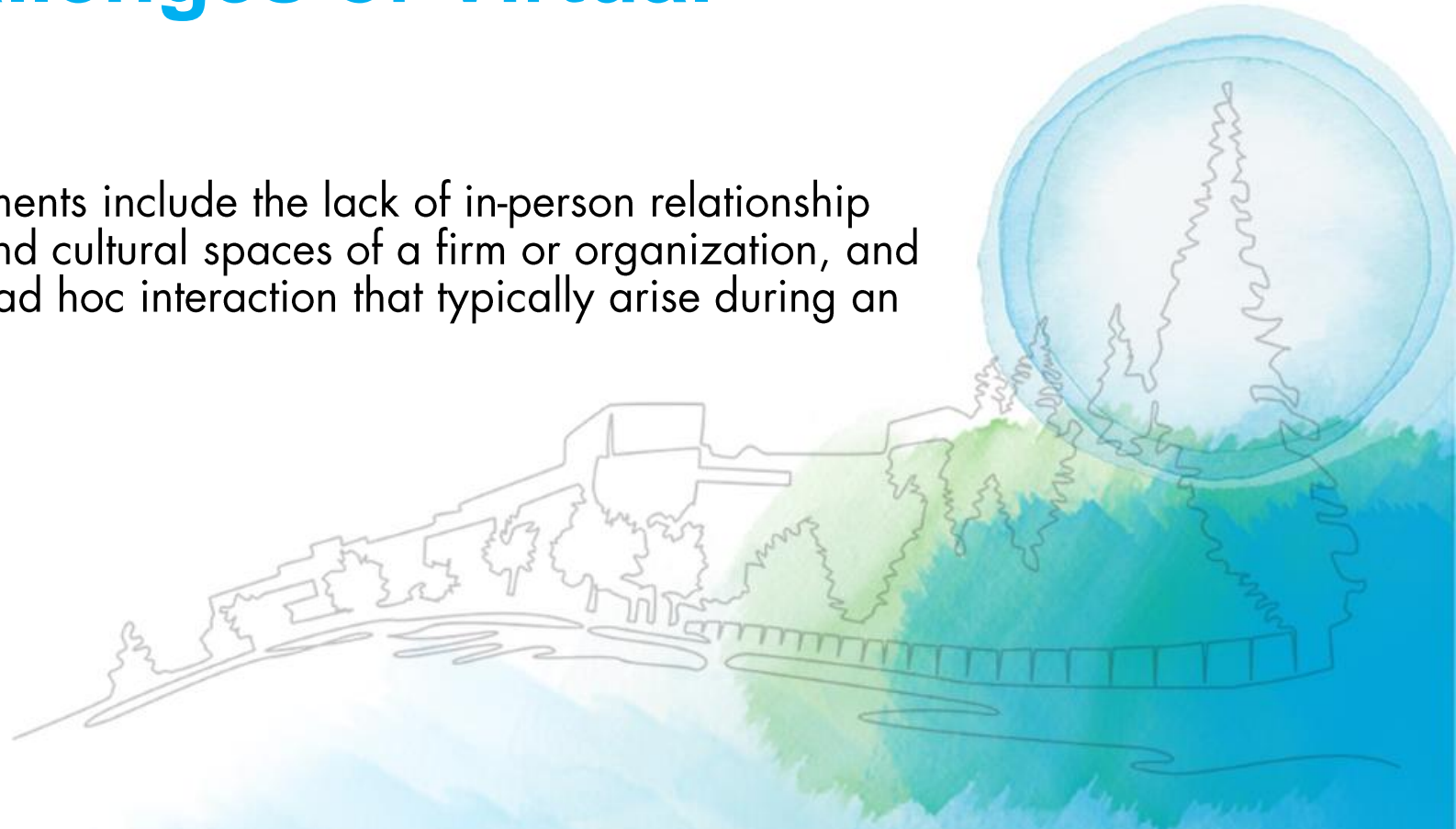


What are the Benefits of Virtual Placements?

- Provides students with a safe, work-based learning experience that is grounded in an authentic task or project
 - Develop skills – either technical, inter-personal or intra-personal – by successfully completing one or more professional assignments on behalf of a professional organization.
 - Experience engaging in online project management and communications, which are common modes of the project- and task-performance in many organizations.
 - New professional contacts, introduction to professional norms, and so on.
 - Includes no travel or housing costs and maybe a solution for students' studying at a distance.
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What are the Challenges of Virtual Placements?

The drawbacks of online work placements 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.

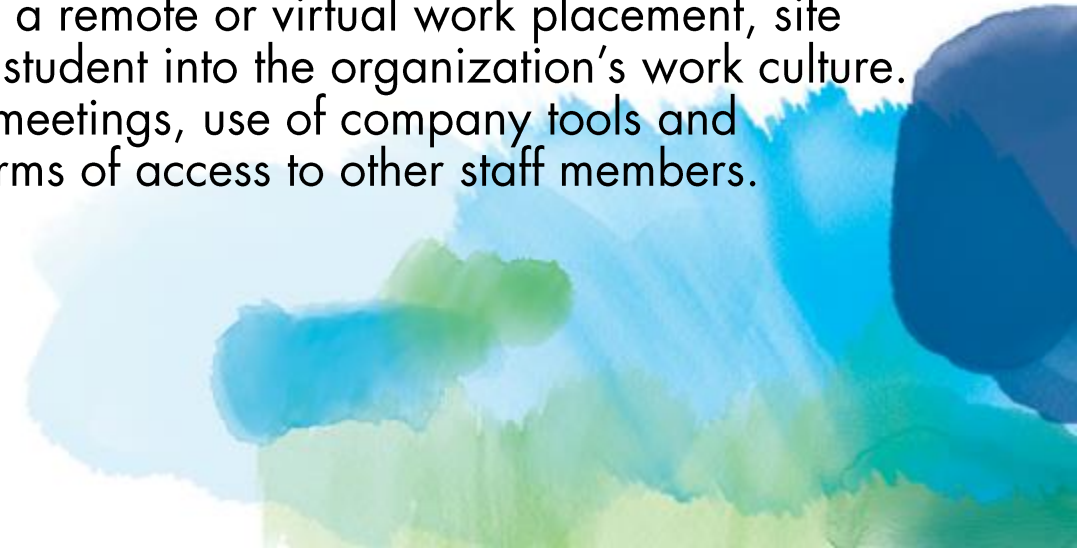


What Should a Virtual Placement Entail?


Virtual internships will vary based on organization and project assigned. However, the list below provides a sample of components we encourage employers to incorporate to ensure you both have a meaningful experience.

- **Access.** It is important that you, the student, have the technical capability to complete projects, maintain frequent contact to address questions, and to submit assignments. Lack of access should not be a barrier for any student.
- **Thorough onboarding and orientation.** A virtual orientation can consist of testing the technology, meeting other students/staff members (as appropriate), learning about the organization, and reviewing organization-wide communication standards and workplace expectations (including taking required legal breaks, lunches, and a system of tracking hours).
- **Goal and Learning Objectives.** Work with your supervisor to develop a plan to ensure established goals are met and check in regularly throughout the work placement to see if you are on track to meet those goals.

What Should a Virtual Placement Entail?

- **Timely Feedback.** Like in-person learning environments, supervisors should review student deliverables and provide timely feedback to students on a regular basis.
 - **Consistent Communication.** Summative feedback should also be provided. This includes an update on expected work activities for the week, outcomes from prior work submissions, and other relevant announcements pertaining to the organization.
 - **Pre-arranged Schedules.** Although a key feature of remote internships is the flexibility of the work schedule, supervisors and students should agree upon a definitive time allotment per week and per day for work placement activities.
 - **Organizational Involvement.** In addition to facilitating a remote or virtual work placement, site supervisors should make a good faith effort to integrate the student into the organization's work culture. This may include attendance at select virtual team or client meetings, use of company tools and resources, participation in online training, and any other forms of access to other staff members.
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What Should a Virtual Placement Entail?

- **Reimbursement of Expenses.** Students engaged in virtual work placements should not incur any personal expenses as a result of the internships “virtual” status. Any such costs, including the purchase of software and hardware for the purposes of the internship, should be covered by the host's company, or alternative arrangements provided to the student prior to starting the internship.
 - **Written Contract or Agreement.** Your supervisor may develop some sort of contract or written agreement about the arrangements between you and the company. Such an agreement may address issues such as expectations, nature of supervision and so on.
 - **Final Evaluation.** At the conclusion of the experience, all parties should evaluate one another and provide feedback on challenges and successes with the online internship. This feedback can be used to improve program operations and assist interns in their continued professional development.
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Resources for Students Participating Virtual Placements



- Face-to-Face Communication – GoToMeeting, Zoom, Google Hangouts
- Other communication tools – Slack, Email, Instant Messenger, etc.
- Free Project Management Tools – Asana, OpenProject, nTask, Monday, etc.
- Online file sharing – DropBox, Box, GoFile, etc

Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL Canada) Resources:

- [Tips for Working at Home](#)