

Guide to help employers coach students remotely

Many of our employer partners are able to provide unique experiential learning opportunities to students who are able to work remotely. This resource should help assist employers develop policies and procedures related to remotely working Georgian College co-op and internship students.

Given the circumstances, the college has encouraged flexibility with regards to allowing students to work from home in order to continue delivery of your products and services while providing students a safe and meaningful co-op.

Georgian is committed to supporting our students and our employer partners during these difficult and unprecedented times. While the health and safety of our students and those within the Georgian community are priority, it's also important for us to ensure the integrity of the co-op experience as a graduation requirement. During the pandemic, Georgian is willing to be flexible in order to work with employers who are supporting our students in co-op. This may include, but is not limited to, reduced working hours, changes in job duties, work from home supports etc. however we need to ensure that students are able to achieve learning outcomes from their academic program and that the work they are doing is authentic and with integrity. Students may be asked to provide proof or samples of their work and how communication, mentorship and supervision/guidance is maintained throughout their work term. As always, we respect the confidential nature of your business and are committed to using this type of information only to verify the legitimacy and authenticity of the work term.

Below are some tips and examples on how to make your remote work effective and successful for the organization and the student.

Availability and responsiveness

Most co-op students have little working experience on-site let alone working from home with little supervision and guidance. It's important to set clear guidelines and expectations around their work.

1. Develop a clear line of communication and ensure contact information is up-to-date and shared between the supervisor and student.

Employer example:

- *We use (email, Skype, phone, FaceTime, Zoom, Webex, text or other) to communicate. Explain when and how so the student is aware that training and meetings may take place by Webex, but that phone and email communication are fine with customers.*

2. Establish regular check-in times by inputting meeting requests in your calendar in advance.

Employer example:

- *Every Tuesday at 11 a.m., we check-in to see progress, coach and assist with anything the student requires to be effective.*

3. Clarify available and expected working hours ahead of time. Update job duties to reflect working from home changes. Encourage the student to “unplug” during non-working hours. It’s especially important to set boundaries and have work/life balance when working from home.

Student example:

- *I still work 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and I am still available to answer team and client questions. How can I record my progress has changed slightly?*

4. Seek an agreed upon timeframe for how long you should take to respond to co-workers/clients and complete projects

Student example:

- *It is expected that I will respond no longer than 24 hours to a request.*

Resources:

<https://builtin.com/company-culture/work-from-home-policy>

<https://blog.walkme.com/how-telecommuting-can-save-your-team/>

Productivity

Work integrated learning is an important educational experience for every student. To maximize their involvement and understanding, set clear tasks and goals. Ensure these are being recorded for the benefit of the student and organization.

1. Discuss work priorities and work load expectations with the student to ensure key deadlines and commitments are met.

Employer and student example:

- *Work is tracked on a spreadsheet. We check things off when tasks are completed. This also makes my college requirements (Employer Evaluation and Work Term Report) easier to finish.*

Resources:

<https://www.business.com/articles/11-tools-for-tracking-your-remote-staffs-productivity/>

Physical environment and required technology

Every home environment will be different. Recommend a distraction free workspace and ensure reliable technology is provided.

1. Check to ensure the students remote environment is conducive to working effectively. Security and confidentiality are a concern so provide a reliable, secure computer.

Student example:

- *I take my work computer home and connect it to the organization's VPN so it's secure and I have a place to save important documents.*

2. Refrain from working in public places.

Responsible work practices:

- *We follow government guidelines of social distancing and to ensure we are all working safely.*

3. Employer documents should be saved to secured centralized folders and avoid saving on personal desktops or laptops.

Security example:

- *Proprietary information is limited to a work computer and share work folders.*

Motivation techniques

Working remotely can be a difficult adjustment for many people. Allowing some flexibility while people adapt to the new working environment and technology is important. Open up discussions around ways to make remote working effective and reward innovative ideas. Keep it engaging and collaborative.

1. Have regular check-ins with your student.

Employer example:

- *Daily morning check-ins give the student the opportunity to voice concerns and track job duties.*

2. Implement an employee recognition program or small, fun ways to engage a team.

Employer example:

- *Create goals, share photos or best practices with teams to allow for healthy competition.*

3. Create a performance tracking system.

Employer example:

- *We use Microsoft Projects to share progress and visualize accomplishments.*

Resources:

<https://blog.hubstaff.com/motivating-employees-who-work-remotely/>

<https://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2020/03/09/working-from-home-tips-to-meet-like-a-pro/>

<https://www.strategy-business.com/article/Virtually-Alone-Real-Ways-to-Connect-Remote-Teams?gko=df868>