Virtual Work Experience and Internships

What is virtual work experience?

Virtual work experience is an opportunity that you can undertake online from your own home, allowing you to connect with employers and activities via your computer across the UK and even internationally, instead of doing it in person. This type of remote experience has grown since the onset of Covid-19, enabling students and graduates to gain valuable skills and enhance their employability during Coronavirus restrictions. Post-pandemic it is likely that a number of these experiences will continue in this format, due to their accessibility and benefits for both participants and providers.

Types of remote experience

Remote experience can take many forms from employer internships and insight experiences, including specific employer diversity initiatives, to work from home projects for businesses or charities and work simulations delivered via online platforms.

Company Led Schemes

Designed to give you a better understanding of the company, their roles and the sector and build your professional experience, some employer insight and internship schemes are offered virtually. They can vary in length and content, from short discovery experiences to vacation schemes and longer internships. They may include e-learning and job specific training or project involvement along with mentoring, socialising and networking opportunities. Sometimes they have a diversity focus and are aimed to attract students of particular ethnicity or gender. Offered by employers in a variety of sectors, check out company websites directly as well as listings on popular vacancy platforms such as **RateMyPlacement**, **Prospects**, **TargetJobs** and our own **Careers Online**.

Online Platforms

You can also look out for specific **online platforms** which provide open access to work simulations from different roles and industries including marketing, finance and consultancy, which can provide a taster of the type of work you might do in different sectors, often not requiring a formal application. These are useful for giving you an insight into certain work areas, are easily accessible, can add to your CV, and may get you noticed by employers, but they may feel more like an online training course than work in the real world. They aren't a direct substitute for a real in person internship. But they are useful and highly convenient for skills and knowledge building in a flexible, low-pressure environment.

One example is **The Forage**, who provide free virtual work experience programs that give students the opportunity to learn career skills from a range of Fortune 500 companies, without requiring a great time commitment. They also offer a **Work Ready Virtual Work Experience,** online programme to help build your confidence and skills ready for the workplace.

Another provider example is **Bright Network**, a membership-based networking platform that offer a variety of work experiences, volunteering and e-learning. hundreds of Loughborough students have already successfully taken part in their **Internship Experience UK** offering.

You can find more online internships on **RateMyPlacement** website by applying the 'virtual' filter in the job length category. But be aware, opportunities from some providers have a fee attached, so make sure you fully understand the terms of the offering; and decide what's best for you.

Additionally, the **Avado academy** offers a fully-funded '**Fast Futures Business Skills**' programme. This is a 12-week skills and mentoring programme, where you gain experience via real business projects and is available to students aged 18 to 24 from diverse backgrounds.

Work from Home Projects

Another option is to undertake a specific piece of remote work either for a business, charity or social enterprise, in the form of a **work from home project.** A good place to look for projects you can do on a voluntary basis is on **Do It**, the well-known volunteering website. Here you can select a 'Do It from home' filter to choose from a wide variety of activities that you can perform at home on voluntary basis to support various organisations in their work, whilst building transferable skills.

You can also apply to undertake real work projects for a business, for example via the **ProjectSet** website, which helps students to find employability opportunities with organisations through hackathons and internships. Similarly, **Workfinder** invite you to apply for real-world work projects in exciting start-ups and scale-ups; the opportunities may be paid or unpaid. The remote internships filter on **GoinGlobal**'s international jobs board is worth a look too.

Further Ideas for Online Skills and Employability Development

There are a number of online learning platforms where you can access free learning and development opportunities to increase your skills and employability, for example **LinkedIn Learning**; an online learning platform that can help you acquire software, technology, business and creative skills to achieve learning, personal and professional goals as well as helping to build your skills set whilst at University. In addition, The Open University offers **Open Learn**, where you can access over 900 short courses, in wide variety of subject areas, ranging in length from 1 to 100 hours of study, and you can check out **FutureLearn**, as well as **Coursera** to find MOOCs run by big name employers on different business topics.
See this **TargetJobs article** for further information, advice and links to course providers.

Articles on virtual work experience and e-learning

For more information and advice about virtual work experience to help you understand what's out there, check out these articles from RateMyPlacement, TargetJobs, and Prospects:

https://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk/virtual-internships

https://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/work-experience-and-internships/virtual-work-experience

https://targetjobs.co.uk/internships/advice/1046376-a-students-guide-to-virtual-internships

https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/career-planning/1052656-how-to-advance-your-career-with-online-courses

Website Links Summary

The Forage (formerly Inside Sherpa)	https://www.theforage.com/	Free virtual work experience programmes giving students the opportunity to learn career skills via short module-based programmes with big name companies.
Bright Network	https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/ https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/internship-experience-uk/	Platform providing a variety of career discovery, internships, networking and e-learning opportunities. Loughborough students can register with the site here.
ProjectSet	https://projectset.com/	Employability opportunities with organisations through hackathons and internships
Workfinder	https://www.workfinder.com/	Apply for real-world work projects in exciting start-ups and scale-ups, opportunities may be paid or unpaid.
Do It	https://do-it.org/	Find work projects for charities and social enterprises that you can do online by using the "Do it from home" filter, on this well-known volunteering website.
RateMyPlacement	https://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk/	Work experience vacancy and information website, listing a wide variety of placements, internships and employer information. 'Remote' opportunities filter available.
GoinGlobal	https://online.goinglobal.com/	You can access the Loughborough portal to this international careers website via the Toolkit on the Careers Network Website. Its extensive jobs board has both 'internship' and 'remote' filters.
Fast Futures	https://www.avadolearning.com/fastfutures/	A 12-week skills and mentoring programme, where students from diverse backgrounds can gain experience via real business projects.
LinkedIn Learning	www.linkedin.com/learning	An online learning platform that allows users to take courses in relevant subjects taught by experts in that field, with over 16,000 courses available.
OpenLearn	https://www.open.edu/openlearn/	The Open University's free online learning platform.
FutureLearn	https://www.futurelearn.com/	A digital Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) learning platform
Coursera	https://www.coursera.org/	A global online learning platform offering access to online courses from leading universities and companies
Prospects	https://www.prospects.ac.uk/	The UK's leading online provider of information, advice and opportunities to students and graduates.
TargetJobs	https://targetjobs.co.uk/	A leading UK graduate careers and jobs website.
Careers Online	https://lboro.targetconnect.net/student/home.html	Careers Network's vacancy portal, and events and appointment booking platform.

TS 26/4/21