

Virtual Internships

A Guide for Students

Summer 2021





GAMMA IOTA SIGMA

The Insurance Industry's Premier Collegiate Talent Pipeline

Students,

What a year. As we reflect on what has transpired since Spring of 2020, we know you have faced many challenges – both personal and professional. You have been dealt a series of hurdles no one could have predicted. But despite the difficulties, Gamma Iota Sigma members have demonstrated astonishing adaptability and strength. We are proud of the way you have pivoted and pushed forward to pursue careers in the insurance industry – virtually.

Despite initial uncertainty regarding the state of the workforce, our industry has proven its resiliency and, most importantly, its unwavering commitment to the next generation of talent – you! In fact, studies show that our industry has continued to grow and add new positions over the last year...a great contrast to many other industries that have been affected. We hope that gives you confidence in your career choice and the future of this industry.

As many organizations plan to host virtual internships again this summer, this guide will equip you to make the most of your virtual experience. Though a virtual internship cannot fully replace an in-person one, the benefits from a virtual internship are numerous, allowing you to:

- Continue to pursue your insurance career despite recent events
- Develop valuable skills and experience that will ease your college-to-career transition
- Recognize an expanded pool of potential employers
- Take advantage of new career opportunities and work for a top-choice company without geographic restrictions
- Recognize increased flexibility in internship schedule that may be full-time, part-time, during the summer, school year, or year-round
- Expand your knowledge of and experience with technology
- Hone your digital communication skills
- Eliminate commute times and expenses
- Reduce or eliminate internship housing and relocation expenses

Gamma Iota Sigma is proud to be a continued resource to students during these times.

All the best,

Gamma Iota Sigma team



Keys to a Successful Internship

Communication and Feedback

- Ongoing, proactive communication between you, your internship supervisor, and your team is key to a successful virtual internship.
- Try to learn and understand your supervisor's management style and preferred channels of communication.
- Be aware of time zone differences when sending emails, messages, or placing phone calls.
- Check your email and other communication platforms often.
- Keep an open feedback dialogue. Ask for feedback and incorporate it into your future performance.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions but, before you do, try to find the answer first. Ask "why" questions along with "how to" questions. When you learn the answer to a question, write it down so you don't have to ask it twice. Keep a log of non-urgent questions to ask your supervisor on your next call.
- Ask your internship supervisor and other colleagues about their adjustment to working from home. You may receive good advice and learn how they like to communicate.

Pro Tip: Ask These Questions

- Is there a dress code for video calls?
- What are my work hours, and can they vary?
- What are the expectations for my response outside of working hours?
- Who should I contact and how if I run into technological problems?
- What forms of communication should I use most (phone calls, emails, interoffice chat, etc.)?

Video Conference Etiquette

- During your first week, ask about the norms for team calls. What does your team normally wear when they take video calls from home? Is everyone expected to turn on their video camera?
- Know your audience and dress for your day. Even if your company has a casual dress code, if you are meeting with an executive, a t-shirt or hoodie may not be appropriate.
- Anticipate potential distractions or interruptions (ex. pets, roommates, yard work being done outside) and try to limit them when possible.
- Test the video conferencing platform before your first meeting if unfamiliar with the platform.
- Dial in a couple of minutes early for each call, in case of delays or technological issues.
- Mute your microphone when you aren't speaking to limit background noise.
- Be aware of your background and personal items visible in your screen.

Developing Your Network

- When interning virtually, be proactive to develop your network.
- Ask your supervisor and/or mentor to recommend people they think are valuable to meet within your business unit.
- Try to identify alumni from your alma mater or Gamma Iota Sigma who are currently working at your organization and may be able to provide additional mentorship or guidance.
- When possible, use video chat to conduct one-on-one meetings, which can be more engaging than a phone call and help you build better rapport.
- Schedule virtual lunches to get to know members of your team.
- Set up intern group coffees with higher-level executives. Keep in mind they have busy schedules and are more likely to accommodate multiple interns than just one (and it's less intimidating).



GAMMA IOTA SIGMA

The Insurance Industry's Premier Collegiate Talent Pipeline

- Get involved! Take advantage of Employee Resource Groups or virtual organizational learning opportunities that may help expand your network.
- After meeting someone new, follow up with an email during or after the internship to maintain the connection. Connect with them on LinkedIn, too.
- Consider sending a hand-written thank you note to leaders who took time to meet with you.

Managing Your Projects and Maximizing Efficiency

- A virtual internship will require you to be self-disciplined, self-motivated and organized.
- Try to simulate an office environment by having a clean workspace, putting your phone aside, and not having distracting tabs open on your computer.
- Even if your internship schedule is flexible, create a schedule for yourself and make it routine.
- Be aware of deadlines, priorities, and next steps. If you don't know what they are, ask.
- Make a timeline for yourself between check-ins with your supervisor to ensure you are staying on track with assignments.
- Frequently save and document the work you are doing, as it's harder to translate this virtually.
- Keep your supervisor apprised of your workload and progress. Don't wait for them to ask you for an update. Communicate with them if you feel you have too much work, not enough, or need to request an extension on a deliverable.
- When asking questions of your supervisor, share your screen so they can see what you are doing.

Getting To Know Other Interns

- Invest in relationships with your fellow interns, who may be your future colleagues or clients.
- Participate in all virtual networking and educational opportunities made available to interns.
- Ask if there are group work activities you can do with other interns.
- If you have a challenging or rewarding experience, share it with the other interns in your organization. They may have similar questions and could benefit from your shared insights.
- Set up intern group chats or texts outside of work just like you might do during an in-person internship.
- Coordinate a virtual happy hour or other networking event with other interns. If it is possible to safely gather in-person, consider connecting with interns who may reside in or near your city.

Avoiding Virtual Burnout

- Take short breaks during the day to get up and walk around, stretch, etc. If you are given a lunch break, take it!
- Set and maintain boundaries. "Close the door" on work after hours, if possible, both physically and mentally. If you do not have a separate space from which to work with a physical door to close, try to put your laptop and other work materials away at the end of the business day. Turn off notifications on your work devices after hours.
- When feeling "Zoom'd out", try scheduling phone calls in lieu of video ones.
- Change up the scenery. For example, if safe to do so, consider meeting your fellow interns for a collaborative workday on Fridays from a local coffee shop.