



Promoting Resilience and Employability in uniVersity PREVIEW

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4.7 Guide for the implementation process of Remote Internship



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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ACRONYM	Description
AP	Action Point
CA	Consortium Agreement
EC	European Commission
GA	General Assembly
KoM	Kick-off Meeting
PM	Project Manager
TL	Team Leader
ToC	Table of Contents
WP	Work Package
WPL	Work Package Leader
RIB	Remote Internship Blueprint
SDM	Service Design Methodology





List of beneficiaries

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The PREVIEW project “Promoting Resilience and Employability in university students through Internships for futurE Work” has been funded by the UE Erasmus+ program with the aim of design, develop and test a student-centered remote internship pathway to prepare university students and graduates with the skills needed to address the work and social challenges arising from the new ways of working.

This deliverable 4.7. concludes the activities of Work Package 4 by providing a Guide for a successful internship program, i.e. a structured yet flexible approach to implement remote internships to ensure smooth experience for students, universities and companies.

Deliverable 4.7. outlines the key elements of a remote internship, with the aim of providing a structured overview and practical guidance. Specifically, it presents the main stakeholders involved in the internship, the phases through which the remote internship is carried out, and the set of skills that are not only essential for the internship experience itself but also increasingly relevant for remote work in general. In addition, the section includes recommendations and guidelines designed to support the implementation of a successful remote internship, ensuring both the effectiveness of the learning process and the quality of the professional experience.





PREVIEW Project description

Students graduating today with business degrees will be working in careers yet to be created, and many already in the workforce will transition from collocated to remote work. How do educators, and individuals, prepare them for what lies ahead?

The Project PREVIEW, based also on lessons already learnt in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, aims at overcoming these emerging challenges in working scenario by developing innovative and inclusive pedagogical and apprentice models to be included in the education system. Specifically, through designing a student-centered remote internship journey along with other university and company activities, the Project PREVIEW aims at supporting the ecosystem actors (students, university tutors and company mentors) in developing and upskilling knowledge and skills according to the new working scenario and organization model occurred by the digital age.

PREVIEW has as its main objective to increase the capacity and readiness of Partners involved, as well as students and universities, and industries staff to manage an effective shift towards digital education required by the organizational changes as consequence of remote working explosion.

The Consortium has identified the tourism and cultural heritage sector as a pilot area. Specifically, the project aims to focus on skills development for remote working to provide students with further employability skills to increase their professional success in a labor market shaped by digital transformation. Despite PREVIEW focuses on the tourism field as piloting action, the project outputs are likely to be easily transferable to other relevant fields.

The Project will support the use of digital technologies for teaching, learning, assessment, and engagement. Particular attention will be given to promoting gender equality and addressing differences in relation to the access and use by underrepresented groups. Furthermore, it addresses the:

1. Development of disadvantaged rural and urban areas, since remote internship could help students from rural areas with economic limitations to live a working experience in interesting and stimulating contexts. To this regards UNISS and ASE are Universities that involve student from these areas. It also could contribute to increasing the participation of disadvantaged groups, e.g. students with disabilities.
2. Open and distance learning priority since the project envisages MOOCs and innovative ICT-based contents, services, pedagogies and practice for internship experiences.
3. New learning and teaching methods and approaches, since the project focuses the development, testing and implementation of flexible learning pathways and modular course design (online and blended) and appropriate forms of assessment, including the development of online assessment and innovative pedagogies models such as collaborative online learning or the use of co-creation approach such Service Design Methodology to design.





PREVIEW Specific objectives

PREVIEW project's main achievement and concrete results are:

1. Design and test an innovative student-centered path for Remote Internship.
2. Promoting a smooth shift in the University Partners from the in-person internship program to a virtual program in the fields of tourism and cultural heritage.
3. Involving at least 100 students or graduates (at least 16 of them with economic and geographical limitations) participating in remote internship experiences in the field of tourism and cultural heritage
4. Providing at least 50 education operators (teachers, trainers, university, and company tutors, etc) with a higher level of digital skills to usefully manage blended internship experiences as well as blended learning.
5. Involving at least 80 education operators in the Learning activities involving at least 150 students in the MOOC on remote skills
6. Facilitating access to international work experiences despite economic and geographical limitations, disabilities, learning difficulties and disadvantages.
7. Establish a strong partnership among University and Tourism and Cultural Heritage business associations to exchange expertise in different fields and to improve the quality of remote internships.
8. Support enterprises involved in the project in transition to remote working.
9. Improvement of knowledge about new methodologies, tools, and technologies as educational means for supporting teachers and students to develop digital and soft skills and competences.
10. Stimulating virtual forms of collaboration and communication among students, university teachers and company representatives.





PREVIEW Methodology

In the following figure n. 1, the methodology underlying the PREVIEW project for the design, development and testing of an innovative student-centered path which, through remote internships and other e-learning activities, will enable students and graduates to develop the employability competences required by the remote working scenario.

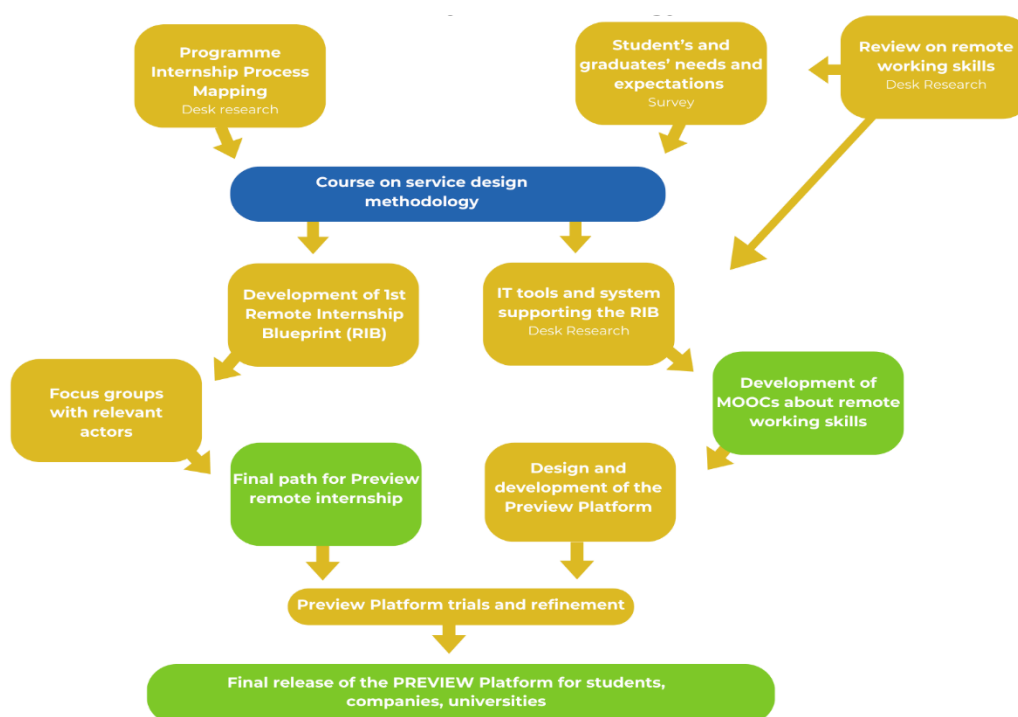


Fig. 1 Preview methodology





1. Guide for the implementation process of Remote

Internship

The following section outlines the key elements of a remote internship, with the aim of providing a structured overview and practical guidance. Specifically, it presents the main stakeholders involved in the internship, the phases through which the remote internship is carried out, and the set of skills that are not only essential for the internship experience itself but also increasingly relevant for remote work in general. In addition, the section includes recommendations and guidelines designed to support the implementation of a successful remote internship, ensuring both the effectiveness of the learning process and the quality of the professional experience.

a. Stakeholders involved in a remote internship experience

Students/Interns
Role: Students or interns are the primary actors who engage in remote experiential learning through hands-on work experience. Responsibilities: • Completing remotely specific projects, tasks or assignments, attending meetings, and adhering to the internship guidelines • <i>Being professional i.e. adhere to workplace norms (punctuality), maintain online professional communication and respect data privacy.</i> • Self-Assessment: Participate in remote evaluations and provide feedback.
University coordinator
Role: • They oversee the logistics of the remote internship program, i.e. develop partnerships with employers, design of the program; select interns, facilitate the remote internship experience by communicating with both parties e.g. to solve misunderstandings; support remotely the students and evaluate their performance to provide academic credit and/or certification for the remote internship. They are also responsible for record tracks and for evaluating the remote internship program's effectiveness. • Students or interns are the primary actors who engage in remote experiential learning through hands-on work experience. Responsibilities: • Design the structure of the remote internship programs within university guidelines and ensure they meet learning objectives and industry standards. • Develop remote internship agreements & maintain partnerships with companies. • Match students with appropriate remote internships based on skills and career goals • Monitor student progress and address concerns. • Evaluation & Feedback: Assess student progress through reports, discussions, and project reviews.
University tutor
Role: University tutors are responsible for overseeing the remote internship program by supporting the relationship between the student and the company mentor (by managing incomprehension, conflicts, etc.)





Responsibilities:	
<i>Mentoring the student remotely, i.e. Provide academic support and career advice.</i>	
Company coordinator	
Role: Company coordinators are the interface between the university and the host organisation. Their role is to be the connector between the university's and the company's requests by linking the students' requests with those of potential mentors. Responsibilities: • Maintain partnerships with the Universities. • Match students with company mentors. • Monitor student progress and address concerns.	
Company mentor	
Role: Mentors guide the interns during their internship. Specifically, they set goals and expectations, provide support, and feedback to ensure that the interns are learning and completing tasks effectively. Responsibilities: • <i>Creation of the job description for the remote internship</i> • Offer remote intern the onboarding, mentorship, and continuous guidance. • Assess remote intern progress and provide feedback. • Encourage remote intern the skill development and professional growth.	

b. From students' awareness to completion: The Remote Internship Phases

Pre-Internship Phase
remote interns become aware of opportunities, apply, and are selected. In this phase, it is essential to clearly define the remote internship pathways and the job arrangements.
Onboarding Phase
<u>Onboarding by Universities:</u> Universities design orientation materials to support students to feel prepared and comfortable in this work experience. These resources may include the remote internship program, policies and procedures of the internship program (e.g. credit, attendance, dress code, certifications), schedule (important dates, deadlines, and events), resources (e.g. templates, presentations and any supporting documents), contact information (e.g. coordinator, tutor/mentor, and other relevant staff members to be aware about who to contact). It also encompasses the training on skills essential for remote working. Competence enhancement does not only concern the phase of the remote internship but also extends to the previous one, thus referring to the need to equip students with those competences that are essential to be effective remotely.



**Onboarding by Company:**

Companies provide an onboarding package with company information, work tools, and project goals to help students to become familiar and effectively integrate into the workplace. These resources include information about the company, internship objectives, expectations, and remote work guidelines

Remote Internship execution

The execution phase of the remote internship involves the following activities:

- Assignment of projects, along with the definition of objectives and deadlines.
- Continuous mentorship and regular feedback provided by the host organization.
- Ongoing monitoring conducted by the university tutor.

Remote Internship completion

The completion phase of the remote internship encompasses the following activities:

- An evaluation of the student's competencies and overall contributions to the internship.
- The submission of a final report, accompanied by a structured reflection session.
- An exit process, which includes reciprocal feedback between student and supervisor, as well as the formal certification of the experience.

c. Remote working Skills

Competence enhancement refers to the equipment of students, university and company staff with those competences that are essential to be effective remotely.

Digital Proficiency

Digital proficiency refers to being competent and confident in using existing technologies, as well as open to learning new technologies for working purposes. Ensuring that all participants are familiar with the necessary technologies and tasks at the onset can significantly impact on the success of remote internships.

It includes *technical skills and information management skills*

Technical skills, that is to use software, devices and applications to accomplish tasks and recognize specific online environments to navigate and maintain. It may include the use of digital tools and platforms for communication (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Zoom), task tracking (e.g. Trello) and document sharing (e.g. Google Drive).

Key components:

- ICT knowledge: understand the characteristics of software, devices or applications.
- ICT usage: operate basic application operations and access resources for everyday use.





- Navigation: avoid losing orientation when navigating online.

- problem solving ability to resolve simple technical issue, identify major technical problems and ask for support.
- cybersecurity: minimizing potential leaks of confidential company and personal data.

Information management skills, that is use ICT to efficiently search, select, organize information to make informed decisions about the most suitable sources of information for a given task. This means ability to formulate a research statement to search for information through ICT (define); use ICT to retrieve information from a variety of online sources (Access); use ICT to judge the usefulness of information for a specific purpose (evaluate); use ICT to organize information (manage).

Work-related competences.

The work-related competences include the self-management, remote communication and collaboration skills.

Self-Management skills

One of the main challenges for remote workers is to self-direct themselves to achieve assigned goals. Participants must be trained to acquire self-management skills enabling them to work effectively in remote working context.

Self-management skills refer to the ability to work independently, self-discipline toward the assigned objectives and motivate oneself. It implies autonomy, that is ability to plan and organize one's own activities without external support, which is highly related to self-efficacy beliefs perceptions of being able to work remotely. It also encompasses time management skills, i.e. ability to set goals and manage progression toward reaching those goals. Self-management also includes self-motivation, endurance of goal striving and continuing activities after interruptions and distractions.

Other relevant skills are:

- decision making skills, that is the ability to integrate information and convert decisions into actions.
- creativity, that is using ICT to generate new or previously unknown ideas, or treat familiar ideas in a new way and transform such ideas into a product, service or process that is recognized as novel within a particular domain.
- problem solving skills, that is being proactive in seeking remotely information to solve a problem.
- critical thinking, that is use ICT to make informed judgements and choices using reflective reasoning and sufficient evidence to support the claims.
- growth mindset, that is continuous improvement of skills with effort and practice.

Remote Communication

In remote working, there is a substantial change in traditional verbal, nonverbal and written communication processes. Participants must therefore be trained to acquire communication skills to transmit remotely information and ideas effectively to colleagues and supervisors using a variety of media and online formats.

In a virtual environment, employees need to know how to use the tools effectively and how to virtually communicate without nonverbal cues. Using the appropriate tools is a part of good communication which,





in general, means avoiding e-mails and instead using telephones or other richer media for important and/or complex communication. Part of this is also being actively involved in virtual meetings and participating in discussion and brainstorming. One key component of communication refers to being able to express opinions or facts, sometimes regarding complex issues, in a very clear and short, but understandable, way. The biggest frustrations can be linked to not being able to communicate in multi-national virtual teams due to cultural and/or languages differences, which are likely to generate misunderstandings.

Remote Collaboration

Another relevant challenge is related to collaboration in remote working context. Participants must be trained to develop skills for effectively collaborate with distant colleagues and supervisors, that is use ICT to exchange information, negotiate agreements, addressing conflicts, and make decisions with mutual respect towards achieving a common goal.

It also implies:

- learn skills to constructively voice disagreement and agreement in order to collectively and constructively work together;
- giving and accepting feedback;
- manage stress and ambiguity;
- helping others when the situation arises.

Socio-emotional competences

Technology-mediated context and physical distance also affect the most intimate and experiential part of the al work. All participants must be trained to acquire self-care skills, reflecting their capabilities to effectively and positively manage work-life boundaries that digital technologies provide though being able to access work at any time or from any place. It also refers to handling social and professional isolation, as well as manage emotions when working remotely.

Remote social skills, reflecting the capabilities to manage and promote social relationships remotely, are important as well. In virtual environment, the process of establishing, maintaining and reinforcing relationships with colleagues and supervisors, along with the building trustworthy relationships follow peculiar patterns. Students and graduates must be trained to be able to successfully manage horizontal relationships (with colleagues) and vertical relationships (with supervisors).

Another relevant skill relates to cultural awareness, that is students and graduates should develop competences enabling them to manage remote diversity i.e. cultural, religious, racial, etc. in case they work in cross-cultural teams and organizations. Being a Team Player Mindset with Cross-Cultural Literacy mean understanding cultural differences and keeping the mind open for other perspectives and ways of looking at issues.





d. Recommendations and practical suggestions for managing successfully a remote internship

In the following, we report recommendations and practical suggestions as emerged from Preview project for a structured, engaged and productive remote internship experience for students, universities, and host companies.

Pre-Internship Phase
- Universities and companies must formally agree about the roles and responsibilities of students, university (coordinators and tutors) and company (coordinator and tutors) throughout the remote internship experience. - From both university and company, it is important to define a standardized remote internship pathway which is, however, flexible enough to adapt to different national regulations, company structures and sectors, and internship activities. - For the student to make an informed choice about internship applications, companies must structure transparent job opportunities in terms of tasks, learning objectives, work schedules, mentoring, and expected outcomes from the remote interns (see Annex 1). They must also contextualize the remote trainee's involvement in the company activity, the expectations in terms of required skills and experience, and provide indications as to how the remote placement will take place. - Task negotiations as a fundamental moment, i.e. the remote interns' job position must be correctly conceived as the result of a process of negotiation between the expectations of the companies and those of the university. The experience should provide remote interns with meaningful tasks to develop professional skills coherently with their curricula and background. Likewise, companies' expectations in terms of the remote intern's contribution and involvement must be duly considered for there to be a real commitment on the part of the company and the mentor in guiding the students throughout the whole experience. - Universities must use a variety of channels to promote remote internship opportunities. Beyond website and newsletters, universities may organize workshops and seminars to present in details each offers, also with the involvement of representatives of hosting organizations. Videos of previous trainees can be effective to narrate the experience in specific company or more generally during a remote internship. - University coordinators must carefully select the applications received to ensure a match between student qualifications and company expectations for the job position. In this direction, individual online interviews as well as group sessions are crucial.
Onboarding Phase
<u>Onboarding by Universities:</u> ● Prepare orientation materials: Design resources covering the remote internship program, policies and procedures of the internship program (e.g. credit, attendance, dress code, certifications), schedule (important dates, deadlines, and events), resources (e.g. templates, presentations and





any supporting documents), contact information (e.g. coordinator, tutor/mentor, and other relevant staff members to be aware about who to contact). ● Train students in remote skills: Provide workshops or modules to strengthen competencies essential for remote working.
Onboarding by Company: ● provide an onboarding package with company information, work tools, and project goals to help students to become familiar and effectively integrate into the workplace. These resources include information about the company, internship objectives, expectations, and remote work guidelines
Remote Internship execution
Company mentors play a crucial role for a positive and engaging remote internship experience, through appropriate mentoring, guidance, and consistent feedback to facilitate students' learning and professional and personal growth. - Company mentors must assign remote interns to projects or teams coherently with their skills and interests. Organizational needs must be considered as well. A meaningful work is likely to enhance students' engagement and skill development. - Company mentors and remote interns must agree on clear goals, deliverables, and work schedule. - Company mentors must provide remote interns with professional and personal guidance and treat them with respect and seriousness. - Company mentors must implement structured "check pulse" to evaluate remote internship progress and timely address challenges. - Company mentors must schedule regular meetings with remote interns. The frequency and timing of meetings should be adaptable based on the complexity of assignments to optimize productivity and not overwhelm participants. Consistent feedback and regular performance evaluations is crucial for maintaining remote interns' motivation and ensure they feel connected with the organizational goals. - Company mentors must frequently interact and communicate with remote interns and provide an atmosphere where open dialogue is appreciated. - Company mentors must be supportive, ensure a positive learning experience (e.g. soft skills as time management), create social and networking opportunities for remote interns to interact with other employees and organizations. Mentors should incorporate team-building activities and networking events to foster a sense of belonging among remote interns. - University tutors must provide support and guidance if needed by students. A proactive approach is crucial.
Remote Internship completion
- At the end of the internship, company mentors must evaluate the remote interns' performance and actual contributions to the organizational objectives during the remote experiences. Most importantly, they must put in evidence the skill developed by the remote interns through the on-field experience.



- Company mentors provide remote interns with reference letter to enhance students' employability.
- University tutors and coordinators must check company mentors reports and must interview remote interns to collect feedback, reflections and insights for program improvement.
- University coordinators provide remote interns with certification and career advice.

