

Internships play a critical role in developing an organization’s future talent pools, but the pandemic had a significant impact on 2020 intern programs. Some were completely cancelled, while others were redesigned for a virtual platform. In our pulse survey, we explore whether Cartus clients and prospects are delivering their 2021 internship programs virtually, what support they typically provide interns, and when and where the internships take place.

Those who completed the Cartus survey work for organizations in a variety of industries, including energy, consumer goods, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, technology, and finance. **Within the group of 38 respondents, nearly half initiate 100 or fewer interns annually, while the remainder are fairly evenly split between the 101-250, 251-400, and 400+ volume ranges.**

When asked the typical length of time for an internship during “non-COVID years,” more than half of respondents said **12 weeks**. It would also appear that the typical length of an internship has not been overtly impacted by the pandemic, as the vast majority (**86%**) of respondents reported programs were not being shortened this year.

WHERE & WHEN



Interns are often sent to multiple work locations to gain a better understanding of the organization for which they are working and to achieve a richer work experience. The majority of those who completed our survey indicated that their internships took place in the **Americas region (78%), followed by EMEA (15%), and APAC (11%).***

Reflecting this regional split, many internships do include multiple locations, but rarely are these international placements, with **88%** sending interns to different locations within the United States.

Most organizations (**71%**) opt for a seasonal program, with the remainder offering internships throughout the year. Of those who said internships were seasonal, most stated that the program took place during the late spring and summer months, typically starting in May or June. A small percentage of respondents indicated that programs run against college and university semesters.

* Respondents could select more than one region.

KEY BENEFITS

Talent management is the top benefit for student internships, as **85%** suggested that their organization’s intern programs were a source of future talent. Another benefit, reported by **56%** of respondents, was “**filling resource gaps.**” These benefits indicate that an organization’s key objective is to achieve a return on investment (ROI) from the intern programs they deliver. Indeed, it would appear they are seeing a positive ROI, given that over half of our respondents (**56%**) said **20%** or more of interns eventually become full-time employees.



PANDEMIC IMPACT



The biggest impact of the pandemic on 2021 internship programs is that **they are being delivered virtually, according to 59% of respondents**. Just **12%** said that there had been no impact at all on internships this year. Encouragingly, no one indicated that their organization’s intern program had been cancelled or put on hold.

Key Challenges

Delivering a virtual internship program does not come without its challenges. Some respondents expressed concern that virtual networking was not having the same impact as networking events conducted face-to-face. Others said that, while networking and engaging virtual events were being delivered, a **“higher level of creativity” was required to deliver them successfully**.

Setting expectations also appears to be more challenging in a virtual environment, with one respondent commenting that **virtual internship programs required “significantly more engagement”** with interns and business leaders to ensure both parties were clear on what was expected.

INTERN SUPPORT

When it comes to providing their interns with support (monetary or otherwise), **43% of organizations provide a lump sum or stipend**. The actual amount varies significantly—from a low of \$400 USD to a high of \$8,000 USD—depending on the length of internship, the intern’s education experience, and the distance they live from the work location. Some organizations also indicated that the current virtual environment in which internships are being delivered means interns receive no financial support.

In normal circumstances when internships occur face-to-face, **two-thirds of companies organize housing** on behalf of their interns, while in **one-third** of cases, interns must find and pay for their own accommodation.

Travel expenses appear more evenly split than housing support, with both mileage (**40% covered it**) and air fare (**48% covered it**) dividing respondents.

A handful of organizations also provide interns with more traditional mobility support such as **language or cultural training**, when the location calls for it.



At Cartus, we help support organizations to develop and implement future internship opportunities. For more information and guidance on your internship programs, contact your Cartus representative or email: cartussolutions@cartus.com.