

Young Canada Works — Remote Work Resource

With the onset of COVID-19, many museums have needed to adapt their operations to include physical distancing and remote work presenting certain challenges for museums welcoming students. With that in mind, the Canadian Museums Association's Young Canada Works team has created this document. We hope that it can serve as a useful resource and that it will help your student or intern have a great experience while working remotely.

WHAT DEFINES A GOOD REMOTE WORK PROJECT?

Much like any work term, a good remote work term should:

- Have clearly defined goals, expectations and outcomes;
 - It is important that these be communicated from the outset and reinforced throughout the work term.
- Ensure student/intern is prepared;
 - Consider what information and resources are needed to do the job remotely.
- Create value for both host institution and the student/intern;
 - The best projects work towards an institutional objective, while at the same time affording the student or intern a chance to explore a personal passion and develop professionally.
- Cultivate a mentor-mentee relationship between manager and student/intern providing feedback opportunities and appropriate supervision;
 - Regular check-ins and updates are an integral part of any successful workplan. Remote check-ins can be done a variety of different ways: eg. over the phone, by e-mail, text message, social media, through Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams and many more. Your institution's teleworking policies may offer additional guidance.

Project outcomes for the remote student/intern should include:

- Skills development
 - Which sector-specific skills will be learned throughout the work term and how are these skills geared toward someone starting their career in heritage?
- Professional networking
 - How can you help your student/intern develop professional relationships within the sector? Inviting them to attend virtual conferences, workshops, and webinars could be a good starting point.
- Exploration
 - Will the student/intern be given the opportunity to explore different types of skills or subdisciplines of the museum sector?
- Professional development
 - How are you fostering professional development? How will the project give the student tools they need to become sector professionals?

WHICH TASKS CAN BE DONE REMOTELY?

Many things can be done with a computer, internet access and creativity.

Examples of tasks that can be done remotely:

- Researching a specific collection, person, or artifact, updating profiles and records.
- Searching collections to find content for social media or blog posts.
- Working on exhibits: researching artifacts, label-writing, design, layout, budgeting. Giving an intern a whole exhibit to design, even if it won't immediately fit into exhibit planning, is excellent experience for an intern and is beneficial to the organization (they have a fully developed exhibit in their back pocket).
- Developing digital program content;
- Researching, developing, and fine-tuning policy documents.
- Outreach and fundraising: researching/writing grants, fundraising initiative, virtually liaising with government, community leader.
- Database clean-up.
- Updating catalogue records.
- Transcribing already-scanned documents.

Young Canada Works employers share their remote work experiences:

Carol Ballard: North Vancouver Museum and Archives, British Columbia

“The North Vancouver Museum and Archives originally received funding for two YCW positions to deliver our annual story-filled walks and pop-up theatre programs. With COVID-19, we are unable to run these programs, as our actors cannot physically distance during shows. Instead, we switched directions and hired two students to develop early childhood programming for the new Museum of North Vancouver. This includes the creation of a museum story time program called Campfire Capers and the illustration of a storybook about our North Vancouver Streetcar #153. Our students started during the first week of July, so we have only just begun our journey together. Mostly they are working from home with a day or two a week in the office. Their remote work is being managed with daily Zoom meetings, and the time rotating in the office allows them to access research and materials in a pandemic-safe way. We anticipate that these projects will have a lasting impact on our organization and community by providing ongoing avenues through which young children can connect to their community’s stories. For the students, this longevity is also be something they can be proud of. Their contributions will have a life beyond their time with our organization.”

Tom McLaughlan: 8th Hussars Museum, Sussex, New Brunswick

“Closure of schools in our area have completely eliminated school and other group visits to the museum for the near future likely extending well into 2021. In an effort to re-establish contact with potential visitors and attract interest groups, we are planning this summer to develop some online digital stories based on our current displays and other use of social media to possibly override social distancing concerns and promote local interest. [Our YCW student]’s computer skills in the areas of digitization, and IT management as well as his background knowledge of the current museum displays will also be an asset in our efforts this summer and will provide him with opportunities to plan, develop and prepare these types of information for fall and winter usage.”

Rhonda Lamb: Kronau Heritage Museum, Saskatchewan

“The Kronau Heritage Museum needed to modify our entire plans for our season due to the limitations of the COVID-19 health crisis. As we were not able to open to the public, we decided to focus strictly on programs and services that could be provided virtually...[Our student] has been able to create virtual tours of our galleries targeted to different age groups - both as videos and images/descriptions on our website. She has also created virtual summer camps - the participants have the option of coming for short, outdoor gatherings as a class which compliments a wide series of daily videos with crafts, stories and online interaction with the children. She has also done an amazing job of creating a virtual version of our annual summer festival. She has slated a series of videos featuring hourly performances, stories and crafts and is encouraging our community to post images of their participation on our Facebook page. By providing everything virtually this year, our potential audience has dramatically increased - we are not only capable of reaching audiences beyond our community but also of creating a greater awareness of our Museum which we hope will attract people to visit us when travel is again possible.

Additional resources for planning remote work projects:

Available in French and English

Summer Students

Lauren Rollit, Muse Magazine

Tips to support your Young Canada Works student remotely and maximize their role at your institution this summer.

Des conseils pour aider votre étudiant de Jeunesse Canada au travail à distance et maximiser son rôle dans votre établissement cet été.

Available in English

Now What?: Project Ideas for Museum Staff Working Remotely

*Cecilia Walls, Content and Editorial Strategist
American Alliance of Museums*

Concise article outlining specific tasks that can be done remotely broken down by museum field.

Learn How to Take Your Internship Program Remote

Symba

Concise advice on how to create an engaging work remote work environment.

WEBINAR: How to Manage a Remote Internship Program at Your Museum

Cuseum

Webinar on remote internships in museums.

Available in French

Connectés à la culture

Conseil International des Musées

Practical advice from foremost international museum body on how to adapt to COVID-19

Guide d'encadrement en télétravail

École de Technologie Supérieure: Université du Québec

Advice on how to prepare and manage a remote work project

Huit conseils pour travailler efficacement de chez soi

Google

Concise tips and tricks for a positive telework experience

For further resources to help museums during the pandemic, please visit the Canadian Museum Association's COVID-19 resource page:
<https://museums.ca/site/aboutthecma/covid19/partnerresources>