

VIRTUAL BEST PRACTICES

PROGRAM/SCHEDULE

- It is ok to consider an abbreviated schedule in the fall and look to start a new program after the first of the year.
- Work with school contact for a potential start date.
- Consider a later start so, students, parents and schools have time to adjust to new academic learning schedule and environment.
- Affiliates will need to make sure all participants of the program are set up to start the program and have the necessary equipment (It seems that the schools across the country are working to make sure their students have access to internet and technology.)
- The goal is to keep the current students and mentors engaged with the program.
- Make sure the complete schedule is available to all participants.

COMPLIANCE

- All students must be registered and have a signed parent consent form.
- All mentors must be registered and have an approved background check.
- At least 2 mentors on every virtual session.
- Attendance should be taken of the students to make sure they are all registered.
- Guest speaker must have an approved mentor involved at all times.
- All rules set out in the [mentor training](#) apply.

VIRTUAL SESSIONS

SESSIONS PLANNING

- Determine the platform for the virtual meetings. Work with school to determine what platforms are being used and what platforms are accessible by the student's technology.
- Determine if sessions will be for the whole affiliate or individual teams (by previous team, school, company, etc).
- Determine timing of sessions: 1 vs. 2 hours – consider shorter sessions to help students stay engaged.
- Set schedule of sessions (decide if the schedule is for fall only).
- Talk to school contact – explain the plans for the affiliates and confirm with the school. Some schools are asking for ACE to be included during the school day.
- Live vs recorded sessions (using a variety of formats will make sessions more interesting).
- Preset agenda with engaging and interactive activities.
- Present the goal of the session and what will be learned at the beginning of the meeting.
- Decide if 1 consecutive project/RFP vs. standalone project each session.

VIRTUAL BEST PRACTICES

SESSIONS AND PROJECT

Students surveys have given some insight on virtual meetings. Here are the suggestions:

- Have all attendees introduced at the beginning of the meeting.
- Everyone should use their camera – feels more like an in-person meeting.
- Smaller meetings or breakout sessions.
- Ask Questions
- Give student(s) a role in the meetings. (give assignment in advance)

PROJECT

- Consider a residential or neighborhood project - more relatable
- Put together welcome packets if desired- to get kids supplies, depending on various activities that are planned
- Utilize CIRT Competition

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

- Offer time for students to interact with mentors to give them time to ask questions
- Office hours can be used for more detailed career guidance
- Decide if hours will be organized by discipline, team or some other way
- Students may want more interaction with their mentors

CURRICULUM

- [ACE @ Home](#) for self-directed student activities.
- [Virtual Curriculum Catalog](#) to be utilized by Mentors.
- [Student Resources](#)
- National Summer Sessions
- Take inventory of mentors and in-person lessons that can be translated into a virtual environment.
- Specialized sessions – SketchUp

 **ACEMENTORTOOLS.ORG**



VIRTUAL BEST PRACTICES

RECRUITMENT

STUDENT RECRUITMENT

- Host a Virtual ACE Open House - invite parents, board, students, alumni, teachers, sponsors, schools, your family and ACE National
- Focus on returning students, have them help you recruit.
- Reach out to students that started but did not complete previous program years as schedules and virtual learning may allow them to participate.
- Encourage students to bring a friend.
- Encourage multiple year participation
- National CIRT Competition
- Reach out to alumni
- Connect with students through social media
- Reach out to High Schools, School Champions, After-School Programs
- Partner with other after school clubs - Habitat for Humanity, Diversity Clubs, Sports, etc.
- Post ACE on High School Club pages with a direct email link to affiliate
- Affiliate and National scholarships, Camps, Summer Sessions, etc.
- Use your data – let the numbers speak for ACE. Use surveys for ideas, quotes, and statistics.

MENTOR RECRUITMENT

- **Needs to be virtual – no in person.**
 1. Guest presenters should register but do not need a background check if only attending 1 session.
- Opportunity for new mentors who could not participate in past for geographic, scheduling, other issues.
- Graduating seniors + alumni – talk to students about their experience, college & career advice, focus on professional development.
- Focus on returning mentors, have them help you recruit.
- Ask past mentors and volunteers to recruit new mentors from their circles.
- Board members send memo or speak to individuals. ACE is a great place to build leadership skills.
- Reach out to sponsor firms. Companies that have active participants in ACE are more likely to donate long-term.
- Lean on national companies who are involved locally
- Social media - start small with one platform
- Use ACE testimonial videos on the website