



TOOLKITS FOR MANAGING EMPLOYER-LED INPUTS INTO SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES



Toolkit 4: Interviewing employers challenge

Outline of activity

This is a careers fact-finding activity, ideally aimed at Year 10 or above. It is a great way to introduce and engage young people with employers from a range of different sectors, or alternatively with a specific sector focus such as STEM. This activity can be carried out in a variety of ways, for small or large groups and with varying numbers of employers.

How it works:

- Students spend up to 10 minutes with each employer in groups of 8-10.
- Students ask questions to find out more about their job roles/how they got into their career/gain useful information.
- Students move onto the next employer in numerical sequence.
- Preparation is required by the students at least 40 minutes prior to the activity so that they have a good understanding of the purpose of the activity, the benefits to them and so that they can prepare questions for each employer.

Location: school hall, sports hall or room large enough to accommodate up to fifteen employers with tables and chairs spread out so that employers and students can clearly hear the questions and answers being asked and provided.

Room layout: tables should be clearly numbered so that students can rotate in groups in an orderly manner. Each group of students are allocated a number during the preparation time which relates to an employer and this is their start point.

Props: ask employers to bring small props to illustrate the work that they do - this can help students to visually understand the different job roles and work that the employers do.

Staff requirements:

- Member of leadership team or head of year to introduce the activity, as well as acknowledge and thank the employers for giving their time to share their experience.
- Remind students what is required, that the time with each employer will be timed and after a set period of time they will hear a sound (e.g. whistle) to signal when to move to the next employer.
- Teachers on hand to ensure students are participating and recording information. Prompt students if they run out of questions to ask.

Preparation session:

- Students to be given the names of the employer participant, job title and company name.
- Teachers to check understanding of jobs titles, giving a brief description if required.

- Students given a pre-printed booklet to write questions they are going to ask and to record answers.
- It can be useful for students to work in groups to prepare questions for each employer.
- Students can be given some suggested questions, but encouraged to vary them (see Appendix 3). Also recommend that students can ask additional questions during their employer timed session, and do not have to stick rigidly to their question sheets.

After the session:

Students and teachers to discuss and review what they have learned and the impact the activity has had on the young person. For example, will they complete any further research, do some work experience, concentrate more on their school work, etc.

Resources and materials needed

- Suggested questions: emailed to employer in advance and given to students in preparation session.
- Record of interviews log booklet.
- Evaluation sheet: employers and students.
- Staff or students to escort and settle employers.
- Room large enough to accommodate employers and students.
- Stopwatch and whistle.
- Tables and chairs.
- Access to internet if needed, or school laptop.
- Table numbers and name signs – easy to follow layout.
- Teachers and support staff to time the sessions, rotate amongst students, etc.
- Refreshments for employers such as water, tea, coffee and biscuits.

Activity considerations

- Time needed for planning and arranging the employers: some employers will reply quickly others may take some time.
- Consider your audience when deciding on employers to target: ideally a wide range of employers for all abilities and qualification level.
- Reserves/back-ups if one or more employers do not show on the day - this could be a teacher, school business manager or IT manager.
- Ensure the students are briefed well, that they see the benefit of this activity and that they engage with the activity.
- Who will set up the room before and after the main activity?
- Who will be the time keeper?
- Employers can become weary after being asked the same questions, so it is best to warn them of this and factor in a break half way through the session.

SMART objectives for students

- ✓ Students' knowledge and understanding of different types of career and pathways are improved.
- ✓ Students gain an understanding of the reality of different jobs.
- ✓ Students may be inspired to think about careers that they may not have considered or been aware of prior to this activity.
- ✓ Students understand that there are different pathways to careers and may find out what it is like to complete an apprenticeship/go to university and the differences.
- ✓ Students start to think about what they want to do in the future and what they need to do next.

How to measure success:

- Through group review/discussion.
- Through student and employer evaluation forms.

Feedback from similar activity

Employers like this style of activity as they see a constant flow of students within a short-period of time, who are hopefully prepared and engaged with the activity.

Employers value being seen equally to other employers.

Students like this style of activity because they can ask the questions that they want answers to and it is more fun and interactive. Students value the exposure to more unusual careers.

Employer comment: *"The interviewing employers challenge events are a great way for the students to ask their own questions in person and is something I certainly would have benefitted from when in their position a few years ago!"*

Year 10 comment: *"The Paralegal/Solicitor talk showed how quickly I had mis-judged the title and job rather than what was actually involved."*

Year 10 comment: *"They inspired me to consider different options and to open my eyes to different jobs."*

Timeline of activities	
	<p>3-6 months before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check dates/room availability/other events. • Plan activity, when, where and which jobs/sectors? • Book resources and equipment including IT department. • Advise all staff and update school calendar – who will attend/support? Ask colleagues for additional contacts. • Contact employers: send a brief, suggested questions, school address, times, audience. • Book/request staff: ask a member of the leadership team to introduce the main activity. Which teachers will deliver introduction/preparatory questions and review on the day? Also rotate around the room during main activity? Who can take photographs? Arrange for a member of staff to help escort guests. • (No more than 3 months before) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chase employers that haven't replied/contact new employers if needed. Contingency plans (who could step in on the day x 2?). ○ Put materials together. ○ Brief/run through plan with designated teachers.
	<p>Week before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact employers to confirm attendance, arrangements and times. • Check/update materials and send to Reprographics. • Update designated teachers. • Request refreshments.
	<p>Day before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind staff, including Reception staff and students about what is happening and what is expected etc. • Check contingencies are in place. • Collect printed materials. • Check parking arrangements are in place.
	<p>On the day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greet employers, offer water, tea or coffee. • Advise where toilets are/fire alarm procedure. • Set up resources, equipment and rooms. Check/provide additional refreshments at break. • Brief teachers of any changes and issue any materials. • Introduce/thank guests. • Manage behaviour, ensure rotation flows. Keep time, prompt questions if needed. • Thank employers at the end of the activity. • Review learning with students and complete evaluation forms.
	<p>Day after</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email thank you to employers, ask if they would consider taking part again/in other activities. • Gain verbal feedback/ evaluation forms.
	<p>Week after/month after</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review evaluation forms and feedback: what went well/needs improving? Make recommendations for the following year. • Check permission for photographs. • Write up newsletter/website article.