



# TOOLKITS FOR MANAGING A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF INDUSTRY VISITS FOR SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STAFF AND STUDENTS



## Toolkit 9: Facilitated networking visits – meet the expert

Toolkit abstract	
<b>Duration of visit</b>	½ day
<b>Key beneficiaries</b>	All students studying to KS3/4/5 and of additional relevance to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• those expressing interest in vocationally orientated full-time courses <i>or</i> applying for apprenticeships after Year 11 and Year 13.</li> </ul>
	Staff teaching students to KS3/4/5 and of additional relevance to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff teaching vocational subjects</li> <li>• Careers and other CEIAG staff in schools wishing to gain deeper insights into specific careers and the local labour market.</li> </ul>
<b>Gatsby Benchmarks associated with this activity</b>	5/6
<b>Activity aim</b>	The aim of this activity is for groups of students to meet “experts” in their work setting and this type of activity can take place in school or as part of a general visit to an employer. As a standalone experience consideration needs to be made of how many “experts” could be met in one visit to make the visit viable in terms of time out of school .

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### Section 1: First considerations before contacting an employer

#### 1.1 Key questions to ask before initiating contact

##### 1.1.1 What learning outcomes do I want for the students from this off-site activity?

Knowledge	
Prior to the visit what do the students need to know about the employer they are going to be hosted by?	What additional information will the staff need to help students make informed careers decisions arising out of the activity itself and any experiences the students have had at the host location?
What currently studied subjects will the activities on this visit link to?	What key questions do I want the staff to ask whilst there?
Skills	
Specific skills or aptitudes that may be needed to work in the workplace visited?	What opportunities would there be to use communication, team-working and other soft workplace skills in the workplace visited or any other?
Importance of English, maths, ICT to roles in this workplace visited as host	Any other important career related information e.g. unique qualifications needed to progress towards specific career goals in the workplace visited?

##### 1.1.2. What do I want to achieve from the learning experience?

What are the objectives of the activity for the school and its students?	How can this visit help to invigorate learning in academic subjects in particular core subjects?
Are there economies of scale in incorporating “meet the expert” activity into a wider off-site visit?	That the learning experience is helpful in terms of developing work-related soft skills.
Has the school already visited this facility before and, if so, was it beneficial?	What activities will I plan in school to follow up the event?

##### 1.1.3. What does the organisation want from the visit?

What are the main objectives of the activity for the employer (and its employees); is it a CSR opportunity for them?	Is the company looking to influence recruitment of new employees, graduates, apprentices or interns as a result of skill shortage?
Is this an opportunity for the organisation to develop its own staff e.g. through delivery of training workshops or networking with educational providers?	Is the organisation looking to develop other strategic relationships with the school, e.g. sponsorship of facilities or provision of materials, equipment or expertise?

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### 1.1.4. Group size, access considerations, budget and staffing considerations

How many students are going to participate in this visit? Is it part of an offer to a selection of students expressing interest in a vocational area e.g. engineering, hairdressing, child care? If a whole year group is attending can they be extracted from lessons?	How many staff will be needed to supervise the students as they conduct the activity?
Will the school need to hire a coach or vehicles larger than school mini-bus? If a coach is hired, will the school pay or will the students need to pay?	Is this activity relevant and realistic for all of the students participating?

## Section 2 – Research prior to making contact with employers hosting this type of experience

### 2.1. Key considerations

The process of meeting the expert needs to be relaxed and spontaneous when the students meet the employer; what needs to occur beforehand to make this experience a success?	To maximise the benefit of taking this activity off-site as opposed to an employer visit, what else might I want from the employer; a tour for example?
What other preparatory activity might the students need to undertake before meeting the employer to ensure that they actually engage and ask questions?	What precursory work might I need to do with the employer to ensure maximum engagement with the students?
<b>Important points to remember!</b>	
Given that this activity could be more cost effective to do in school as opposed to off-site, what value-added elements am I looking for from the employer?	
If I approach the right employer, what opportunities arise to meet a number of experts in one visit. If the organisation has many departments e.g. a local council, are there opportunities for the students to engage with a range of employees in one experience?	

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### Section 3 - Making contact with the employer

#### 3.1. Preferred method(s) of communication with employer

Communication method	Benefit	Drawback
<p><b>Preferred method(s)</b></p> <p>Since it is likely that to gain access to a range of “experts” you will be approaching organisations to the larger end of the spectrum, consider that there are a range of potential contacts.</p> <p>Be prepared to contact a “gate keeper” e.g. a secretary or call centre, but be prepared to ask for a range of potential individuals including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Community Manager</li> <li>• HR or Training and Development Manager</li> <li>• Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Manager</li> <li>• Site or Facilities manager</li> </ul>	<p>Calling is more direct, but be clear in what you are asking for; essentially you want your students to meet with the organisation’s staff to discuss what they do at work.</p>	<p>Whilst it may be appealing to take this activity off-site to meet a range of staff, employers may not be able to spare their staff to do this, and could prefer to send a member of their team to the school. Regard this as a win-win situation, as you are still engaged with the employer if this is suggested.</p>
<p><b>Important points to remember!</b></p>		
<p>Before making the approach, define who you might want your students to meet whilst visiting the employer. It may be worth writing a short list of the types of roles you might encounter, for example, when visiting an organisation based at Gloucester Docks.</p>		

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### 3.2. What to do include in your ask?

#### Relevance & points to negotiate

What curriculum need is this filling for my students, and what do I actually need from the employer?

How many “experts” will the students get chance to meet, and what will the format be, will they be in training room or will they meet employees in their actual settings? This is important because different learners will respond better to different learning experiences

If it is clear that the employer cannot host a visit by the school, what are the other things can you ask them to support from a menu of choices? Is it best in this situation to e-mail a list of opportunities to the employer for them to respond to?

Have you decided before you ask for support what you are seeking? Are clear about what the organisation does from your research, or are you going into the situation blind?

#### Important points to remember!

Larger organisations will offer a greater range of experts, so it is worth considering this, but also ensure if you choose this approach that the visit is balanced i.e. allow time for the students to ask questions, and not just passively engage in a site visit. It is important, if the meeting is combined with a general site visit, that more time is given to Q+A if this activity is undertaken.

### 3.3. Next steps after making initial contact

Take up the offer of a meeting or site visit to negotiate what you feel would work best. This will help you define what they can offer, and also what would be most helpful to learn from them to help your students.

Provide the employer with information about the ages of the students, any specific SEND needs, the interests of the students, and, most importantly, how many students will visit.

#### Housekeeping

Clarify with the employer: timings, which site is to be visited, and who will be receiving your party on-site as this could be different to the person who brokers the visit.

Ensure that you are clear about;

- Duration of the visit –a full day starting at x and finishing at y
- If the students need refreshments, who will be providing them, the employer, you or the students themselves?

Have I written a robust emergency care plan and have emergency contacts?

Has parental consent been obtained and refusals managed?

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### Section 4 – Planning the Activity

#### 4.1 SMART Objectives for visit

1) Activity prior to the visit (staff)	Measure of success
1.1 Staff to define what preparatory activity needs to be conducted, so for example will it be a lesson preparing for the visit, or activity to help the students to develop questioning techniques.	<p>Against the aims of the activity, all students are briefed, or have conducted pre-cursory activity ahead of the visit to the employer.</p> <p>Have the students conducted group or individual research into the company and its activities ahead of the visit?</p>
2) Activity during the visit (students)	Measure of success
2.1 Students engage in the activity	<p>Assess the students' use of active questioning and listening skills, and observe how they generally respond to and engage with the various "experts" that they meet during the visit.</p> <p>Single out examples of exemplar behaviour from individual students during the visit for comment upon during the visit and any review afterwards.</p>
3) Activity during the visit (staff)	Measure of success
3.1. Staff to undertake assessment of students engaging with the employer in the workplace and range and depth of questions asked.	Using relevant assessment and observation techniques, ensure that learning is taking place during the activity. Observe how the learners respond to answers given by the employers.
4) Activity after the visit (students)	Measure of success
4.1. Students to complete a reflective log of their experience.	<p>In addition to the activity undertaken above, reflective log could include response to the following sample questions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most useful part of the activity was (why)</li> <li>• The least useful part of the activity (why)</li> <li>• What types of questions were asked of the employer during the visit?</li> <li>• Did you enjoy generally the visit to the employer (why) and, if not, why?</li> <li>• What are the key things you have learnt from this experience?</li> <li>• What do you now know more about the application of academic subjects to this particular type of employment?</li> </ul>

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5) Activity after the visit (staff)	Measure of success
5.1. Staff to evaluate learning experiences during the activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish mechanisms to incorporate learning experiences into subsequent lesson plans or isolate element or themes to incorporate into the scheme of work.</li><li>• Explicit use of resources supplied by the company at the training activity including virtual resources supplied.</li><li>• Reflection on key successes and individual successes displayed by students whilst with the employer.</li></ul>

### Section 5 – After the Activity

#### 5.1. Follow-on activity after visit is complete

##### 5.1.1. Follow-on steps for the staff

- Contact the employer after the visit and thank them for their support of your team and your school and invite them to visit the school if they have opportunity to do so.
- Provide any feedback that you have received from the staff and students about the experience.
- Publish their experiences on your website including photos and videos and share with other members of your team and the employer (data protection permitting).
- As outlined above, ensure that accurate records have been made of the names and positions of any staff they met/or you contacted whilst brokering the visit.
- Make timely suggestions about improvements which can be made to the learning experience to the employer based on feedback from attendees.

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### Section 6 – Timeline

#### 6.1. Timeline

- 3 months before the intended visit make initial contact with the employer(s) shortlisted for support.
- As soon as possible arrange a visit to discuss what can be offered.
- 2-4 weeks before activity call to ensure everything is still set and ready to go.
- 1 week before the visit confirm with other staff that they are clear what they will be doing on the day.
- Day of the visit, ensure that all students due to go on the visit attend.
- 1-2 days after the visit, call, e-mail the employer to thank them, provide any feedback, and follow up on any queries, comments raised by the staff.
- 1-2 days after the visit, ensure that a student representative has written to the employer to thank them for their efforts in supporting this learning experience.
- 3-4 days after the visit, publish pictures, write an article to go on your school website or to be put in newsletter and share with the employer.
- Based on your initial conversation with the employer immediately afterwards and no longer than 6 months after make contact again to establish any other forms of support they can offer.

### Section 7 – Information Sources

#### 7.1. Additional resources and helpful contacts

Governors/parents/who do you/your teaching staff know?

Alumni/former students and students

Talking to companies and organisations at employer and careers events

GFirst LEP - [www.gfirstlep.com/](http://www.gfirstlep.com/)

GROWS - [www.grows.ac.uk/teacher](http://www.grows.ac.uk/teacher) Inspiring the future - [Connect schools and colleges with appropriate volunteers from a range of sectors and professions that match their particular requirements. www.inspiringthefuture.org/](http://www.inspiringthefuture.org/)

STEM Ambassadors - STEM Ambassadors work with young people in schools and other community groups and can provide talks, workshops and attend careers events. [www.graphicscience.co.uk/stem/](http://www.graphicscience.co.uk/stem/)