



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



Education & Skills
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Toolkit 2: Visit to local employer for work shadowing experience

Toolkit abstract	
Duration of visit	2-4 hours
Key beneficiaries	All students studying to KS3/4/5 and of additional relevance to; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• those expressing interest in vocationally-based full-time courses <i>or</i> applying for apprenticeships after Year 11 and Year 13
	Staff teaching students to KS3/4/5 and of additional relevance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff teaching vocational subjects• Careers and other CEIAG staff in schools wishing to gain deeper insights into specific careers and the local labour market.
Gatsby benchmarks associated with this activity	5/6
Activity aim	The aim of this type of visit is for students and their accompanying teachers or support staff to gain greater insights into workplace practice, types of skills required, job types and roles and the sorts of job offers made to young people.

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Section 1: First considerations before arranging visit to employer

1.1 Key questions to ask before initiating contact

1.1.1 What learning outcomes do I want for my students from the visit?

Knowledge	
Prior to the visit do my students need to find out about the workplace or roles that they have expressed interest in?	What information do they need from the visit to help them make informed careers decisions?
What currently studied subjects does the visit link to?	What key questions do I want them to ask whilst there?
Skills	
Specific skills or aptitudes needed for the workplace visited	What qualifications/skills will they need to work or apply for an apprenticeship in this workplace?
Importance of English, maths, ICT to workplaces visited	Any other important career-related information e.g. unique qualifications needed to progress towards a specific career goal e.g. to become a solicitor?

1.1.2. What do I want from the visit?

What are the objectives of the activity for the school and its students?	Are there future networking opportunities?
What questions might I or the accompanying member of staff want to ask?	Do I want this to be an experience of a workplace, or something related to a particular career choice expressed by the student in question?
Has the school already visited this establishment before and if so was it beneficial?	What activity will I plan in school to follow up the event?

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1.1.3. What does the organisation want from the visit?

What are the main objectives of the activity for the employer (and employees)?	Is the company looking to recruit new apprentices, school leavers, or graduates?
Is this an opportunity for the organisation to develop its own staff?	Will my students be asked to take part in promotional activity for the company and if so, what do I need to do about it?

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

How many students do I intend to take – i.e. one student or a group of selected students. Is the group size realistic for the company? Do I need to consider how a visit may fit in around exam timetables and school policy on year group extractions?	How will I ensure that this visit appeals to students with specific SEND needs e.g. autism? What specific access arrangements do I need to consider? Can these be fulfilled by the employer?
Can I use the school mini-bus or will I need to hire a vehicle to take the students there?	How many staff need to accompany the student(s) on the visit?
If a bus is used, will the school pay, or will there be a charge?	
Ensure that you ask employer to reserve an adequate parking space	Do I need to write a risk assessment or will the employer write one?

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Section 2 – Research prior to making contact with the employer

2.1. Key considerations

<p>What sort(s) of employer might I wish to contact?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider employment sector e.g. legal profession, high technology and manufacturing, health profession. • Size of organisation e.g. local SME (Small/Medium/Enterprises) or branch of a Multinational. • Reputation of the employer locally. 	<p>Is the activity something available to all students, or is it something that is available on a request basis?</p>
<p>Speak to representatives of companies when they are at events already organised by your own school e.g. at a careers fair/post-16 event or practice interview sessions etc.</p>	<p>Speak to your designated careers lead in school as they will often have pre-existing contact with a range of local employers and may be able to recommend particular companies who are approachable and/or have supported your school before.</p>
<p>Visit the website of the preferred employer(s) to establish if they already offer this type of activity or specific activities relevant and of benefit to young people.</p>	<p>Can your school alumni or parents help in terms of shadowing opportunities?</p>
<p>Important points to remember!</p>	
<p>Employers will have very different pressures to yourself e.g. large projects, responding to busy periods or new orders, staff willing and available to be shadowed</p>	
<p>Some employers will offer highly structured opportunities for shadowing and other structured work place visits, but many, particularly SMEs will not.</p>	
<p>For Health and Safety reasons some employers may not offer this type of workplace experience.</p>	
<p>Your initial contact could be part of a wider ask for support as opposed to a bespoke activity, so will shadowing be part of a potential menu of support that the employer could be asked to support.</p>	

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Section 3 - Making initial contact with the employer

3.1. Preferred method(s) of communication with employer

Communication method	Benefit	Drawback
<p>Preferred method(s)</p> <p>Initially make contact by phone with the organisation.</p> <p>For small organisations it is probably best to approach or ask for the 'manager' or owner/director. Ring to confirm full name, preferred contact details and time of day it would be best to re-contact.</p> <p>In larger organisations there are several people that you could approach e.g.;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Community Manager • HR or Training and Development Manager • Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Manager 	<p>An e-mail might suffice, but a phone call is generally your first in-road when approaching a company cold.</p>	<p>Companies are approached regularly for other forms of support e.g. sponsorship of charitable events, so be ready with a clear ask and a case for support of your school.</p>
<p>Important points to remember!</p>		
<p>Be realistic – you are contacting the employer with the best of intentions but they may not be able to fulfil your requests for a huge range of reasons.</p>		
<p>Companies with clear CSR guidelines are likely to be more supportive and will likely respond to your request, but it will be under their terms.</p>		
<p>Smaller companies may have less time elasticity, and so will offer times suitable for them, which may not fit in with your timetable, so be prepared to be flexible from the outset.</p>		

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3.1. What to include in your initial e-mail/say in your call

Providing correct and full contact details	
By phone	
When prompted to do so by the secretary or the person you make first contact with, ensure that you supply the best number you can be contacted on. This is difficult in schools, and so also give information about when it is best for you to be contacted e.g. during break-time, lunch-hour or best after school.	If you need to have a subsequent conversation with a manager or other designated person in the company, ensure that you ask for their full title, direct telephone number and when they prefer to be contacted. If you are asked to e-mail ensure you have the correct address. Some companies will be informal and will say, ask for Jane or Dave for example, but keep it formal until you meet in person.
By e-mail (initial or subsequent communication)	
As designated lead, always ensure that you use your full name, job title and supply full contact details including postal address for your school at the foot of your e-mail.	Copy other members of your team into the e-mail so that the employer has alternative contacts to re-contact if you're not available.
What do you want from them to make the visit a success?	
Explain that you would like to organise a shadowing experience for x amount of students on a date convenient to the employer, stating times when it would be difficult for the students to visit e.g. holidays, exam periods.	Specify ages as opposed to year groups as employers often won't recognise terms such as Key Stage 4 or Year 11 unless they have children of their own.
It is also helpful to be clear about why you have chosen this company to contact. Not only does it impress the company but it also makes the experience more specific to a subject area and more relevant to the student, i.e. it isn't just an experience of work, it is directly relevant to their career planning.	Specify age of students coming as often activities can be geared to a specific group
Important points to remember!	
Companies of all sizes are often motivated by a desire to give something back to their local community and, whilst this is often altruistic, they may also be looking for ways to ensure the future viability of their business, particularly in areas and sectors of skill shortage.	
Be confident that the visit can fit in within your timetable to avoid last minute cancellations owing to unforeseen changes on your part.	

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3.2. Next steps after making initial contact

Some points to consider before the visit	
After the initial phone call it is very sensible to visit the employer in their workplace so that you essentially create an agreement between the parties i.e. your school and the employer.	Establish with the employer if the visit will involve the student shadowing one person, a team, or different people in different roles and settings in the workplace.
During the visit, ask the employer what skills and qualifications they value the most. This will help you to link the visit to curriculum aims.	If you are in a position to share general information about the characteristics of the student or students who will visit this can be helpful for the employer.
It is advisable to check with the employer whether there will be a dress-code for the visit e.g. will they be wearing protective clothing?	Are there specific regulatory considerations e.g. will your students come into contact with vulnerable people? How will they be briefed?
Housekeeping	
Ensure that the employer is aware that cancellations can occur owing to illness, unexpected changes at school, or a crisis. If they are parents they will know that this is common when working with teenagers, but it will avoid disappointment later on if they are made aware early on.	Depending on the time of day and the length of the visit, it is worth clarifying if the employer will provide refreshments or has, for example a canteen. If not, the student may need to take a packed lunch for the visit.
Have I prepared a robust care plan and a list of emergency contacts?	Have I obtained parental consent and managed refusals?

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Section 4 – Planning the Activity

4.1 SMART Objectives for visit

1) Activity prior to visit (students)	Measure of success
1.1 Students briefed to ask at least one question about the visit e.g. what type of qualifications would I need to obtain if I wanted to work with you?	Student to complete a photo journal (with permission of employer) and complete a reflective log after the visit to discuss what they learned and what question(s) they asked whilst with the employer.
2) Activity during the visit (staff)	Measure of success
2.1. If staff are present, they should observe and assess questions asked by students and reflect on ways to improve the experience and feed this back to employer.	Verbal or written feedback given to the student on the day or afterwards in response to comments made by the student in the reflective log and pictures taken in the photo journal.
	Verbal or written feedback given to the provider staff on the day of the visit.
2.2. Ensure that all students and any staff present complete any feedback forms provided by the employer to improve future experience.	All staff and students present submit forms to employer at the end of the visit.
3) Activity during the visit (students)	Measure of success
3.1. Student to shadow employee or group of employees	Student to take a photo journal and make notes to add to the reflective log. This will help them to discuss what they liked and/or disliked about the visit, and suggest a different company or type of employer if the visit wasn't to their satisfaction.
3.2. Student to suggest what could be improved for future visits.	Student to complete reflective log to discuss what they would improve upon for a future visit, or for other students having the same experience.
4) Activity after the visit (students)	Measure of success
4.1. Student to complete a reflective log of their experience	In addition to the above, reflective log could include response to the following sample questions; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The best part of the visit was (why) • The part I enjoyed the least of the visit was (why) • Did you enjoy the visit (why) and, if not, why? • Have you learnt something new from the experience? if so, what? • Do you think you know more about this particular type of employment? Describe what you have learnt from the visit. • What has this taught you about the workplace? Describe how is it different from school?
5) Activity after the visit (staff)	Measure of success
5.1. Staff to collect contact details from other members of staff met on the day of the visit to maintain contact following the activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business cards collected or contact details exchanged with staff present on the day • Pictures shared from photo journals with the employer

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Section 5 – After the Activity

5.1. Follow-on activity

5.1.1 Follow-on steps for the students

- Ensure the student has information to enable them to meet the employer again e.g. at a future careers event, or know how to apply for jobs, apprenticeships or school leaver/graduate schemes with them in the future.
- As above ensure the student(s) write(s) a reflective log about the experience outlining what they learned, e.g. unexpected things about the activity, likes and dislikes, and questions to establish if this activity helped them to plan their subsequent career steps.

5.1.2. Follow-on steps for the staff

- It is often sufficient to thank the staff on the day, but an e-mail or follow up call after the visit is often welcome and ensures continuity, especially if the organiser doesn't attend the event in person.
- Encourage the student(s) to be the one(s) who call or write to thank the employer. Often a letter shows greater professionalism and commitment to the company.
- Provide feedback when requested and any anecdotal observations to host staff.
- Publish your experiences on your website including photos from journals and videos and share with your team and the employer (data protection permitting).
- As outlined above, ensure that accurate records have been made of the names and positions of staff contacted and met are added to a database.
- Make timely suggestions about improvements which can be made to the learning experience to your team and the employer.
- Brief other colleagues about the experience and celebrate the successes of individual students and any particular noteworthy moments.

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Section 6 – Timeline

6.1. Timeline

- 6 months – 2 months prior to visit contact the employer in question to organise visit.
- As soon as possible after arranging the visit, pre-visit the employer to clarify arrangements and see where the student(s) will be going.
- Day of event – attend and leave at times specified.
- 1-2 days after the event, call, e-mail or write to the employer to thank them, provide any feedback, and follow up on any student queries.
- 1-2 days after the event, ensure you are on the circulation list for periodical newsletters/information e-mails published by the employer.
- 3-4 days after the event, publish pictures, write an article and share with the employer.
- Up to 6 months after make contact again with the employer to schedule next shadowing visit.

Section 7 – Information Sources

7.1. Additional resources and helpful contacts

Careers Lab <https://www.careerslab.co.uk/> businesses into the classroom to deliver inspiring careers lessons side-by-side with teachers, helping young people to think more widely about their working life.

Federation of Small Businesses <https://www.fsb.org.uk>

GFirst LEP-Education Team

GFirst LEP – Enterprise Co-ordinator – Careers and Enterprise Company

Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce <https://www.businesswest.co.uk/chambers/gloucestershire-chamber-of-commerce>

GROWS - 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

Schoolsnet - <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/school-office/school-visits/> Suggested locations for visits, and H+S guidance for offsite visits

South West Business – Top 100 Gloucestershire Companies <http://www.southwestbusiness.co.uk/regions/gloucestershire/top-100-businesses-in-gloucestershire-2016-29062016072734/>

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/

Yell.com <https://www.yell.com/> electronic yellow pages for local businesses

Young Enterprise - <https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/what-we-do/our-programmes-new/> - Note; there will be a cost for these programmes.