**Plan for a mock interview workshop**

Many schools will seek employer involvement in mock interviews. As part of this activity, it can be useful to provide an introductory overview which explains where interviews sit within your own organisation or sector’s typical recruitment processes. Often interviews are just one part of modern application processes which may also involve task-based assessment, psychometric assessments or portfolios.

When providing feedback, explain how young people can use everyday experiences (e.g. peer-mentoring, and school leadership roles) to profile their attitude and aptitude not just their work-related experience.

This template outlines what mock interviews are and supports you to plan your questions and feedback.

**Mock interviews**

**What are they?**

Mock interviews are a simulated interview experience. They can be run on either a one-to-one or group basis. Business volunteers play the role of an interviewer and ask students questions and – crucially – provide them with actionable feedback.

**Why are they used?**

Mock interviews help to build students’ confidence by allowing them to practise responding to questions in a safe and supportive environment. Interview experiences can have a positive impact on students’ future prospects, giving the time and space to practise valuable essential skills. They can also act as professional development experiences for current employees, as they have the chance to build on and hone their knowledge of the interview process.

**What are the skill students use in a mock interview?**

* Speaking.
* Listening.
* Confidence.

**What might a mock interview session look like?**

A - Mock interview carousel

This involves students working in groups and a taking it in turns to respond to interview questions asked by a business volunteer, who will also provide feedback on each student’s responses. A selection of interview questions could be displayed on a PowerPoint – one per slide. During the carousel, each question is revealed one at a time. For each round, or question round, business volunteers ask each student in their group the same question, in turn. After each student has answered the question, volunteers should provide students with actionable feedback. Volunteers can then move to the next group of students and await the next question to be revealed. Group interviews like this are beneficial for students as they provide meaningful peer-learning opportunities.

B - Formal mock interviews

Formal mock interviews can be run online or in-person. They could be in response to a fictious job role or related to interest in a particular sector. Two or more business volunteers become a panel of interviewers, taking it in turns to ask students some key interview questions.

You can find a selection of potential mock interview questions at the end of this document.

These formal mock interviews can be made more conversational, if required, with business volunteers prompting students to develop or expand upon their responses. To provide students with a realistic interview experience, sessions should last between 20 and 30 minutes. At the end of the interview, the student should be encouraged to thank the panel for their time. Business volunteers can then speak to students about their performance, ideally providing them with written guidance on how to improve next time.

In the interests of safeguarding, students should not be alone in private rooms with business volunteers.

**Top tips**

You may wish to share these top tips with students before the mock interview:

* Research the employer and wider sector before the interview.
* Review the application form and the job description before the interview, if applicable.
* Research and practise answering some common interview competency-based questions.
* Consider the company’s dress code.
* Arrive in plenty of time (and make sure all IT is working in advance, if the interview is online).
* Make a strong first impression – display positive body language, smile and make eye contact (if possible).
* Adopt language suitable for the audience and formality of the event.

**What could happen after a mock interview session?**

Ask students to reflect on the feedback they have received. Ask them to make an action plan to help structure next steps. You could also introduce the STAR technique and then invite students to work with a peer to improve their answers to certain questions using the technique. The STAR framework is particularly useful when students are asked about overcoming challenges or reflecting on work experience opportunities.

* Situation - what was the situation and when did it take place?
* Task - what task was it, and what was the objective?
* Action - what action did you take to achieve this?
* Result - what happened as a result of your action? (Some people add reflection here too. What did you learn from the experience and how will these learnings support you moving forward?)

**Section 1: Questions for your mock interview activity**

This first section of the template includes some suggested questions for business volunteers to ask students in a mock interview activity. They are a mix of unstructured and competency-based questions.

To help business volunteers provide students with targeted and actionable feedback, they can write notes about the student’s performance in the space below each question. This should include the student’s strengths and weaknesses. For example, a positive might be that the student took time to consider the question carefully before they responded. An improvement area might be that the student digressed from the question being asked which caused them to lose focus and confidence.

Please feel free to adapt this document to suit your context.

|  |
| --- |
|   Tell me about yourself.   |
|            |
| Why do you want to work in this sector?  |
|          |
| Can you think of any challenges faced by those working in this sector? (*Additional element to the original question stem if needed as a prompt: How would you use your skills to help overcome these challenges?*)  |
|         |
| What achievement are you most proud of and why?  |
|          |
| Can you give me an example of a challenge that you have faced, in either your academic or personal life, and explain how you overcame it?  |
|             |
| Describe a situation in which you have worked as part of a team to achieve a common goal. (*Additional element to the original question stem if needed as a prompt: Were you satisfied with the outcome and what were your learnings?*)  |
|              |
| Can you please tell me about a time where you displayed leadership skills?   |
|          |
| Can you think of a time when you had to deal with conflict in either your academic or personal life? (*Additional element to the original question stem if needed as a prompt: How did you respond to the conflict and what were your learnings?*)  |
|             |

**Section 2: Interview observation guidance**

This second section of the template is designed for business volunteers to provide targeted feedback to students on their verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

Ensure you are aware of specific students’ preferred communication styles. Some students with SEND, for example, find making and maintaining eye contact challenging; others may need to move in order to focus. The school or college’s SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) will be able to provide you with further guidance and support on specific students’ needs.

Feel free to adapt this document to suit your context.

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| --- |
| **Non-verbal communication**  |
|   | **Excellent**  | **Good**  | **Needs improvement**  |
| Eye contact  |   |   |   |
| Body language (facial expressions/posture/gesture)  |   |   |   |
| Engagement/enthusiasm  |   |   |   |
| Comments:      |
| **Verbal communication**  |
|   | **Excellent**  | **Good**  | **Needs improvement**  |
| Response structure (for example, the STAR framework)  |   |   |   |
| Clarity and tone  |   |   |   |
| Grammar  |   |   |   |
| Use of time  |   |   |   |
| Comments:     |

|  |
| --- |
| **General feedback**  |
|   |

*What’s next for employers?*

Once you’ve had some experience in delivering careers outreach activities, you may be interested to review and refine your offer.

The Careers and Enterprise Company has developed The [Employer Standards](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/employers/employer-standards) a framework and tool to improve quality in **employer outreach in careers education**. The framework shows what good looks like and the **free online** **tool** helps those who want to evaluate their outreach and plan improvements. It’s free and takes just 25 minutes to use.