



# Teacher Encounters

A practical guide for employers



# Teacher Encounters – What are they?

A Teacher Encounter provides an opportunity for teachers to engage directly with employers to learn about the different career pathways relevant to their subjects, and to observe how their subject is applied practically in business.

Teachers can then meaningfully use these insights to enrich their curriculum teaching, helping their students build a deeper understanding of opportunities, connections between learning, and industry and the essential skills that need to be honed for different roles. There are a number of pathways and routes into employment, in particular technical and vocational options like apprenticeships. This knowledge can empower educators to effectively support students to take their best next step into your sector or workplace.

Teacher Encounters can be delivered in a variety of ways; from providing one-to-one placements, to small or large groups of teachers from a single school or multiple schools. We recommend that an encounter should be a minimum of 5 hours long but this can include both preparation and follow up activity.

Hear from one of our Cornerstone Employers and Headteachers in Dudley about the impact their Teacher Encounters programme has had [here](#).



# Teacher Encounters – what do they deliver?

## A meaningful interaction between teachers and employers

- Teachers increase their knowledge, confidence and understanding of the labour market, pathways and skills needed to grow the economy and are able to relate working world experiences to the curriculum they teach.
- Employers widen their reach within education, support the development of their talent pipeline and develop their outreach to maximise impact on young people and the return on their investment.
- Young people can relate their education to the world of work and are more informed and better prepared for their next step.

**Shared benefits for all** - There has been considerable progress in careers education in recent years and the next stage is to deepen the relationship between classroom teachers and employers. We know that helping young people find their best next step from education into employment is a shared mission for teachers and business. To embed a culture of careers within education, careers needs to become a mainstream focus in schools and colleges.

**Benefits to Teachers** - Teachers pass on messages about career pathways through the relationships they build with young people and the curriculum they teach. Teachers need support to do this, because they do not always have the knowledge or experience of all pathways, the labour market, or the skills that employers need and value. Being able to link the curriculum to the world of work can enable students and teachers to relate education to future career pathways and help find additional ways to inspire and motivate students.

**Benefits to Employers** - Offering Teacher Encounters supports deeper and more impactful engagement with your local community and future talent pipeline. Evidence tells us that teachers are one the biggest influencers on young people's decision making and Teacher Encounters give you the opportunity to support them to inspire the next generation to the best of their ability.

Opportunities in the workplace, the ways employers recruit, and the skills, qualifications and attributes that are valued and in demand is a rapidly changing landscape. It is vital for employers to have the opportunity to upskill the education workforce to enable them to keep up to date with these changes and to ensure a suitable talent pipeline exists to meet the future needs of the economy. We have an opportunity to influence both curriculum intent and delivery, as well as increasing awareness of different pathways and opportunities.

This guide provides practical advice on how to plan and deliver quality, robust and impactful Teacher Encounters based on evidence from the 1000 Teacher Encounters delivered during the pilot year in 2023.



# Quality - Making it meaningful

To ensure that a Teacher Encounter is meaningful, it must meet the following requirements:	Confirmed
The encounter is aligned to the 'Teacher Encounter Outcome Framework' to ensure there are clearly articulated aims and defined learning outcomes relating to careers education	
The encounter should highlight all available and relevant routes available to students at key transition points to ensure messaging is unbiased. (If you aren't sure about the latest routes, talk to others involved in early careers in your workforce and/or sector peers, or local Apprenticeship and Technical Education providers)	
The encounter involves comprehensive two-way interaction between teachers and employers/ employees	
The encounter should provide time for reflection, action planning or resource development for them to take back into school so they can produce a scalable and shareable output	
The encounter should have a relevant level of pre and post communication, support and impact evaluation	



# 1. Plan

You have the flexibility to agree with your school how your Teacher Encounters will be delivered, from providing one-to-one placements, to small or large groups of teachers from a single school or multiple schools. Remember an encounter should be a minimum of 5 hours long in total, but this can include preparation and post-encounter activity.

## 1a – Define the purpose

**Action** – look at the outcome framework and consider the types of outcomes your organisation is best equipped to offer to teachers i.e. – A laboratory may be best placed to offer specific curriculum support to STEM teachers; a management consultancy may be best placed to offer support on recruitment processes, skills and behaviours required in the workplace to teachers of post-16 students. An organisation looking to increase diversity in the workplace, may want to target their offer to special education needs and disability schools (SEND) or schools with higher numbers of disadvantaged students.

## 1b – Consider your capacity

Consider your organisations capacity and resources when thinking through the depth or scale of your encounter and how you might sustain the engagement in the future once you have established relationships with the school(s). Evidence from the pilot year showed that both employers and teachers preferred face to face encounters. However, if you are providing opportunities for a large group of teachers, then there may be a place for a generic virtual introduction before your encounter or an opportunity for teachers across multiple schools to meet up virtually, post-encounter, to share impact and ideas. In order to ensure your encounter gives as broad a view as possible, you may want to think of whether there are other organisations in your sector, supply chain or network that may want to be included in your encounter.



### 1c – Consult with your School/College

It is important to provide some flexibility to schools in order for them to be able to engage fully with your offer. Consider the availability and capacity of the staff or schools identified. Education staff are often restricted by timetables and key pinch points at certain times of the year.

**Action** – Speak with your local Careers Hub who can support you in developing your offer and engaging your targeted schools.

Once you have engaged a school, refer back to the [outcomes framework](#) to consult with them and agree joint aims and objectives for your event and what success could look like for you both.

**Action** – Your discussions with the school(s) should help you plan the length of the encounter, the timeframe for delivery and where the encounter takes place. The majority of an encounter should take place on an employer's premises, however schools may also allocate time in faculty meetings or school training days to follow up on the main employer visit.

Consider who else in the school needs to be involved to progress and authorise attendance at your encounter – there are resources to help with communicating to specific school audiences [here](#).





## 1d - Agree your outputs - Designing your encounter

Ensure that there are clear outputs that will be actioned during or after their encounter. This should ensure a sustainable element to the CPD you are offering.

**Action** – Agree your outputs. Outputs could include:

- An action planning meeting at the end of the placement to review the encounter and decide on any further opportunities to collaborate
- An agreement to cascade the information back in school to colleagues
- A project or activity that you can develop with the teacher to deliver to students in school
- An area of the curriculum you can work with the teacher on to create/update a scheme of work that includes real work-based examples or problems to solve
- Identifying resources or equipment that can be used in school to bring lessons to life
- Identifying future school activities that the employer/employees could support
- Information that can be adapted for parents to highlight local pathways and opportunities

It is important to provide time within your encounter for teachers to develop these outputs. However inspired and motivated the teachers are during the encounter, it is likely they will struggle to deliver on any actions once they are back in school unless specific time is allocated and agreed at the outset.



## 2. Delivering your encounter

Evidence showed that teachers most enjoyed meeting young role models as well as hands on activities during their encounter. A useful checklist and example agenda for your day is below.

2a - Practical things to consider when delivering your encounter		
Pre- encounter Checklist	Notes	Complete
Can you use existing induction processes as part of your encounter?		
Do you have appropriate Public Liability Insurance?		
Who will be the primary and secondary hosts within the organisation?		
The encounter should have a relevant level of pre and post communication, support and impact evaluation.		
Where will the teacher(s) be located and what equipment will they need? Remember it's likely they will want to be able to type up notes and capture thoughts.		
Will you require them to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement?		
Will the teacher(s) need an employee or visitor access pass and do they have any access requirements?		
Will they require any personal protective equipment (PPE)? If so, ask for their sizes.		
Information to provide ahead of time		
An agenda with clear aims, objectives, outcomes and actions and follow up expected from the day.		
Transport, parking, building access information and lunch arrangements (e.g. is there a canteen?).		
Details of a nominated contact person.		
Start and finish times (ideally, you'll provide a timetable/agenda).		
Dress code if applicable.		
Company background information or any pre reading ahead of the day.		



## 2b - Example Agenda/Timetable

Virtual introduction pre-encounter (where relevant) that provides them with local labour market information, industry information, and expectations for the day.		
Housekeeping – health and safety, fire drills, policies on phones/taking photos etc.		
Introduction to the company and industry/supply chain. E.g. Organisational overview - history, products, services, culture, values, recruitment practices/pathways, skills gaps.		
Agree joint aims and objectives of the day and expected outcomes.		
Tour of the facilities, meet relevant members of staff (especially younger employees that can discuss their own careers journey).		
Interactive activity – could be subject based or wider activity dependent on your audience.		
Breakout groups to discuss where learning from the day could impact on the curriculum/general teaching practises.		
In depth discussions with relevant departments to inform teacher action planning – this could be to develop a teaching resource, develop a project that brings an element of the curriculum to life or to develop a slide deck to present back in school to a wider audience.		
Agree follow up activities and opportunities to share contact details. Share post placement evaluation.		

# 3. Evaluate

## 3a - Evaluate and improve

Collecting and evaluating feedback will help you to improve your Teacher Encounters. Ask yourself “Is the feedback we are collecting giving us the information we need to determine whether the intended outcome has been achieved?” Education staff are familiar with giving feedback but do not always have time to respond to emails. Try quick straw polls, manual feedback forms issued on the day, or virtual polls to get the feedback you need. An example of a Teacher Encounter survey can be found [here](#).

## 3b - Sustain the Impact

Reflect on the information you’ve collected ready to adapt and improve your Teacher Encounters and share findings with your school partners and internal stakeholders. Consider how Teacher Encounters fit into your wider careers education strategy. The partnerships you’ve built with teachers may be able to improve the impact of your other careers activities and ensure you’re being as inclusive as possible. To review your overall approach use our [free 25 minute self-assessment tool](#) based on the [9 Employer Standards for Careers Education](#).

## 3c - Share best practice

You can find best practice from year one of the [Teacher Encounters Programme in the report here](#). Interested in sharing your impact with us? Contact your [local Careers Hub here](#) – they can share an evaluation template to ensure the impact of your encounters are included in our national findings and shared locally.



## Find out more about Teacher Encounters [here](#)

Teacher Encounters is a great example of partnering with others to maximise impact. 'Partner with Others' (Standard 7) is one of the 9 keys areas that make up the [Employer Standards for Careers Education](#).