

Being Work Ready: Facilitator Guide

Overview and Purpose

This session is designed to give students an insight into the practicalities of the workplace and expectations of professional attitudes and behaviours there may be.

With an increase in apprenticeships and school/college leaver roles, it is important that students are prepared and this session aims to support their transition into the workplace.

(Note: we recognise that all workplaces are different. This session is to start students thinking about this topic. It is key that students refer to the policies and procedures in their workplace, as appropriate.)

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Consider some of the practicalities about working
- Consider some of the attitudes and behaviours that may be required in the workplace
- Begin to develop an understanding of expectations within the workplace

Agenda

Getting Started (5 min)

- What do you already know?

Being Work Ready (45 min)

- Practicalities of the world of work
- Attitudes and Behaviours
- Scenario Activity

Wrap-up & Reflection (10 mins)

Preparation / Materials Needed

- Chart Paper / Post It Notes
- Marker pens
- Scenarios - print 1 copy per pair/group
- Download the session PowerPoint

For virtual delivery, students can make their own notes (on paper or on a device) and can download their own copy of the activities pack.

Vocabulary

Salary: The money that someone is paid each month or week by their employer, typically a fixed sum. Salaries are usually expressed as an annual figure and agreed in an employment contract.

Pay: A more general term for the money you get from your employer for doing your job.

Tax: A compulsory charge imposed by the government to fund government and other public spending, such as the NHS, policing and education. There are different forms of tax but the most common one is income tax, which is deducted from your salary.

Benefits: Additional rewards offered to employees from their employer, on top of their salary. These include things such as a company car, pension contributions, employee shopping portal and discounts.

Induction: Initial training for new joiners run by the organisation. This may include health and safety and IT setup.

Commute: The journey we make to and from our place of work.

Professionalism: The behaviour and attitudes expected of someone in a work or business environment.

Teaching Guide

This guide includes a suggested script for the session (in orange). However, please feel free to tailor and adapt this accordingly when delivering.

Section 1: Getting Started (5 minutes)

Good morning/afternoon everyone. In this session, we are going to talk about getting ready for the world of work and what you might expect.

Share the agenda of the session on the screen (slide 2).

Ask each group to spend **1 minute** writing down any words or phrases that come to mind when someone talks about “work” or their workplace. Encourage students to write down any questions they might have too. If delivering face to face, students could use a big piece of paper or Post It Notes to collect their ideas (slide 4). If they have extra time, get them to think about the ways in which workplaces may differ from each other.

Debrief the whole class back together for **3 minutes** asking each table in turn their thoughts. This is simply to get the students thinking about what they already know and also assess their current understanding.

Section 2: Being Work Ready (45 minutes)

Activity 1 - Practicalities of the world of work

Explain that students should be thinking about being ready for the workplace even before they have a job. Emphasise the point on the slide (6) that when students apply for a job, this is their first opportunity to make a good impression on the company.

Talk through the things to consider on the slide, adding in anything additional that comes to mind.

Your email address: lots of us set up an email address at a relatively young age, and this tends to be reflected in the address itself. For example - **ilovecatz@gmail.com**. When applying for jobs, it is important to consider what impression an email address like that might give. Remember, you want to come across as professional and appropriate for the job in question.

Social Media: a huge majority of us have at least one social media account - e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tiktok, LinkedIn. What can people find out about you by doing a simple search? Employers have been known to check out potential employees on social media.

Ask students to discuss in pairs for 2 minutes what actions they could take after today in response to these. Feedback as a class for 3 minutes, discussing things such as: set up a new email address with their name (e.g. joe.bloggs@gmail.com), use this email for all job applications or communications with employers, check their digital footprint and privacy settings.

Moving onto slide 8, explain to students that starting a new job can quite a daunting prospect, especially if it's your first ever job. Talk through the things to consider on the slide, adding anything additional that comes to mind.

Commuting: commuting is our travel to/from our place of work. How are you going to get to work? How much will it cost you? How often will you need to travel into work? (Note: Covid-19 has had a huge impact on the way we work and flexible/home working is likely to become more common moving forward. However, it is important to note that each company and each role will have different expectations and requirements, so it is worth checking.)

Induction/Training: most jobs will offer some form of initial training, known as induction. This typically includes an introduction to the company and your team(s), health and safety briefings, IT set up, introduction to other workplace policies etc. Different companies will induct their new employees in different ways.

Dress code: organisations will have their own dress code policy and may have a specific uniform. Ask students what they think would be an acceptable dress code for an office-based workplace; what about a clothes shop?

Tiredness: especially if it's your first job, or if you're returning to work after a long break, you might feel exhausted after the first week or so of full working days!

Wellbeing: starting a new job or entering a new environment can be stressful. It's particularly important that you check in with yourself during this time, and prioritise your mental and physical health. Make sure to plan out some time to see friends, do things you enjoy, and unwind.

What support is available: in all roles, you will have a line manager, who you will report into and will be responsible for your workload. Some organisations may give you a “buddy” to begin with, who will support you with settling into the role and organisation. It is important that you find out who to speak to for help, whether that’s related to work or it’s a personal matter. For example, organisations will have a department responsible for their staff - dealing with pay, welfare etc.

Finding out who’s who: it’s important to take the time to find out who is who within your team / department etc. Some organisations have an organisation chart, which sets out who is who, what their roles are, and how they fit into the larger organisation.

Moving onto slide 8, explain to students that there are lots of different things for them to be aware of, or find out about, when they start a job. It’s important to be aware of these in advance so that they can be prepared for the future. Talk through the things to consider on the slide, adding anything additional that comes to mind.

Salary, tax and having a bank account: any paid employment will come with a salary, which may be paid weekly or monthly. Your salary means the money that you earn and are paid regularly by your employer, typically a fixed sum. Salaries are usually expressed as an annual figure and agreed in an employment contract. (Note: You can take a look at the Financial Literacy curriculum for more sessions on this topic). It is worth making students aware of zero hour contracts and the fact that not all jobs have fixed salaries. Zero hour contracts is used to describe a contract where the employer is not obliged to provide any minimum number of working hours to the employee - for example, in the retail and hospitality industries.

Benefits: Employers tend to offer their staff additional rewards on top of their salary (their financial reward). These include things such as a company car, pension contributions, employee shopping portal (where employees can access special deals such as on mobile phones, hotels and clothes) and discounts.

Holidays: Statutory holiday entitlement (i.e. set by the government) is 5.6 weeks holiday, which equates to 28 days, based on a 5 day working week. Employers set their own holiday policies and often include public and bank holidays within this entitlement, although this is not a legal requirement. Some organisations may choose to enhance this entitlement and reward their staff with a higher number of holidays a year.

Working hours: Typical working hours would be 9-5, Monday to Friday with a 30 minute break for lunch, equalling 37.5 hours a week. Different organisations might offer slightly different working hours, depending on their policies. Likewise, some jobs require shift work, with longer working hours over a different pattern of days - for example, in hospitals or in retail. Some organisations offer “flexible working”, which means you may be able to flex or change your working hours or place of work (e.g. working from home). (Note: worth highlighting the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the working world and working practices, with more organisations noticing the benefits of a more flexible work environment).

Time keeping: Similar to your working hours, you need to know when and how often you’re allowed to take breaks. This will vary by employer and the role you are in. It is also important to be on time to work and follow your working hours/shift pattern.

Living arrangements and costs: It is important to consider where you are going to live - are you able to stay at home? Do you need to move somewhere new for your job? If so, where are you going to live and who with? Remember, your salary will need to cover the costs of living - such as rent, bills (gas and electricity) and food, as well as any commuting costs. Depending on your salary, you may be able to get support with living costs.

Sickness (and other policies): Your employer will have lots of workplace policies so that all employees know and understand what they should and should not do. For example, what you should do if you are ill. It is important to take note of all of the important policies - if in doubt, ask a colleague or your line manager.

Activity 2 - Attitudes and Behaviours

(Slide 9) Explain to students that, as they will be used to in school, there are expectations around behaviour in the workplace. On the slide, there are 8 different topics. Ask students to choose one and, in pairs, discuss what they think it means and how it applies in the workplace. **(3 minutes)**

Then debrief the different topics. Hear from a few different groups on their thoughts. Included below are some suggestions on the different topics; you can add any other points.

Professionalism: This means the behaviour and attitudes expected of someone in a work or business environment. Each organisation will work slightly differently but there are general rules and expectations that are common across organisations. For example: being polite, being on time, level of formality. Can the students think of anything else?

Having opinions: It’s good to have an opinion, don’t underestimate yourself. You will have been given your job for a reason. All of your experience (from school, college, work experience etc.) forms who you are and shapes your perspective and opinions on matters. However, remember to be courteous and respectful with expressing your opinions, and choosing the correct manner to do so.

Asking questions: Asking questions is a good thing! You won't be expected to know everything on your first day, or ever! It's always better to ask questions early on than to struggle in silence. Everyone has different strengths and skills - you will likely be surrounded by people who you can learn from and they can also learn from you. As with opinions, remember to be courteous and respectful in how and where you ask questions. For example, if you had a query about the specifics of a project or a term that was used in a meeting, catch your manager or colleague after the meeting to ask for clarification, rather than interrupting mid-meeting.

The social side of work: Workplaces are sociable places, and you will work with lots of different people. Some workplaces hold social events to allow for team building and socialising outside of work. This will allow you to get to know other people.

First impressions: Think about your behaviours. There are lots of simple things you can do to make a good impression. For example: smile, greet people politely, arrive on time.

Phone/internet usage: Find out what it is acceptable in your organisation. There may be a policy on personal phone and internet usage.

Soft skills: Soft skills cover any skill that is not technical or related to a specific job or role. They may be called employability skills, and support people in their career. For example: communication, time management, relationship building, organisation.

Self-Awareness: Who are you? What makes you you? What do you bring to the table? Everyone has their own strengths and skill set to bring to a situation. Think about what yours are but also be aware of your development points. Asking for feedback from a colleague can help.

Activity 3 - Scenarios

Now that you have considered some of the practicalities of the workplace and the attitudes and behaviours that are expected, you are going to put this into practice.

Explain that students will be working in pairs to consider 6 different scenarios. Each scenario describes a situation that students may face on a work experience placement or in the workplace. Students should read through each scenario and discuss which of the four options they would choose and why. Some options are more appropriate than others. They should explore the pros and cons of each option, and may wish to act out their chosen scenario, should they have time.

Hand out the activity pack (scenarios) and allow students **10 minutes** to work through in pairs. Then go through each scenario, asking for students to feedback on their thoughts. (**5 minutes**). See Answers pack.

Remember that every workplace is different, and will have different expectations. There is no definitive right or wrong way to approach a situation, but these points can be used as a suggested guide for behaviour in a workplace. It is important to go into a new role with an open mind, being prepared to learn and adapt to the working environment, whilst remaining mindful of your own personal values and principles.

Section 3: Wrap Up & Reflection (10 minutes)

Time for students to reflect on what they have learnt from this session. Revisit the Post Its/flipcharts/notes from the starter activity. Have we answered any of the questions noted?

Ask students to select one of the sentence starters (slide 12) and complete. Choose a few students to share with the wider group.

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