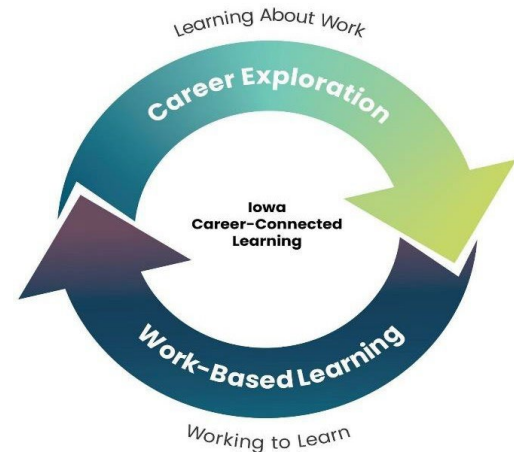


# Career Immersion Experience Toolkit

## Career immersion experience definition:

Career immersion experiences are a **career exploration** experience allowing for hands-on interaction through simulators and activities associated with the represented career path(s). The industry partner professionals supporting this event should help connect the experience to everyday responsibilities associated with the particular career. To maximize student career learning and engagement, the students should spend time learning foundational career knowledge prior to the career immersion experience to maximize engagement with industry professionals at the event.



## Preparation for the Career Immersion Experience

### Identify the location of the career immersion experience

- The experience could take place at a career academy, regional center or community college. Review district/college policies based on the location.
- If the experience is taking place at an industry partner site, review and adhere to district/college policies when leaving the building/campus.
- If the experience will take place in the parking lot or other outdoor areas, take into consideration weather, environment and district/college policies when outside of the building while on institutional grounds.

### Identify industry professionals who are a good match for the experience

- Take into consideration that students should not only experience the simulation but also learn more about what the career includes. This could be done through a station rotation or other informative manner.
- As an educator or instructor, you know your student learners and their needs. Consider identifying a professional who:
  - works in a career of interest or in a related career field of interest of the student
  - lives in your community or near your community (if possible)
  - is an engaging speaker and passionate about their career/organization

### Prepare students for a positive experience

- Provide age-appropriate career learning. Examples:
  - reading a book about the career (ideal for elementary students)
  - watching a short video clip on the career
  - assigning a career and/or organization research assignment
  - sharing the speaker's biography with the student
- Support students to prepare questions to enrich the experience through additional research.  
Examples:
  - provide a career research classroom activity or assignment
  - provide an organization research activity or assignment
- Support student professionalism with the experience.
  - Prepare students with a preview to understand what the experience will include
  - If there are particular safety or professional behavior expectations, discuss and practice those in the classroom prior to the experience to increase successful outcomes

- Outline clear expectations of professional behavior for the students
  - » Student participation expectations with the hands-on activities
  - » Professional attire and appearance
  - » Questions students are to ask to demonstrate interest and understanding of the career
  - » If the educator/instructor expects students to submit a completed assignment, activity or project from the event, provide the expectations and identify how and when students will submit their responses

## Prepare the industry professional/partner for a positive experience

### Logistics

- If the experience will be in your classroom:
  - Share parking information
  - Share information on the process and security protocols to enter the building
    - » If applicable, identify a staff member who will meet the professional in the front office
  - Confirm the day and time for the career immersion experience
  - Relay expectations for the student's professional behavior and attire
- If the experience will be on school grounds, but outside of the building:
  - For the visiting industry partner:
    - » Share parking information and the location for the event
    - » Share information on the process and security protocols to enter the building
      - ◇ If applicable, identify a staff member who will meet the professional in the front office
    - » Confirm the day and time for the career immersion experience
    - » Relay expectations for the student's professional behavior and attire
- If the experience will be outside of your classroom building, but in an accompanying district building site, career academy, regional center or community college:
  - Identify and coordinate transportation and parking logistics
  - Identify and coordinate supporting staff needed, based on student participation
  - Follow district/college policies and protocol for offsite events/experiences for the educational institution event location
  - Confirm the day and time for the career immersion experience
  - Relay expectations for the student's professional behavior and attire
- If the experience will be at an industry site:
  - Identify and coordinate transportation and parking logistics
  - Identify and coordinate supporting staff needed, based on student participation
  - Follow district/college policies and protocol for offsite events/experiences
  - Confirm the day and time for the career immersion experience
  - Relay expectations for the student's professional behavior and attire
- Finalize and confirm details of the event with the industry partner and site location/venue
  - Initial planning and final confirmation closer to the event
- Outline clear expectations to support learning goals
  - Communicate key career components for students to experience for the professional to share
  - Communicate connections of the career to student learning in the classroom
    - » Share current concepts students are learning and ask that the professional connect how those are used in their work
    - » Share upcoming concepts that the professional could provide a preview or an example to help extend student learning

## During the Career Immersion Experience

### Provide a simple checklist for the day of the event

- Relay educational expectations for the professional
  - Actively engage with student participants and assist with technical simulation issues
  - Provide a demonstration prior to student participation
  - Bridge the experience to careers in the field
  - Be prepared to answer the student's questions during the experience
- Relay expectations for the student
  - Arrive prepared to participate and ask questions during the experience
  - Be mindful of other participants and the industry partner
  - Use professionalism in behavior, communication and attire during the experience
- Relay expectations for the educator/instructor
  - Ensure the logistics of the event are communicated and adhered to
  - Be mindful of the time and if there are multiple stations and rotations
  - Be present and willing to support the professional to ensure students are respectful and are actively participating

## After the Career Immersion Experience

### Make note of the experience and collect feedback

- Collect and document feedback from the professionals, students and your own observations
- Identify recommendations to improve future experiences

### Send a thank you note to the professional(s)

- Encourage students to write a thank you note or email as well
  - Connects the value of the professional's time and provides an opportunity for students to practice professional skills.

## Connect the career immersion experience with student ICAP

*Note for college instructors: Although the acronym ICAP is used in K-12, the following examples provide valuable reflection activities applicable in supporting work-based learning for college students.*

Sample reflection activities:

- Muddiest Point
  - At the close of the work-based learning experience, have students write or verbally respond with a question or what they think is the "muddiest point" they learned through the experience.
- Survey
  - Create a short survey and provide a QR code for students to complete their response
- More examples are available on the [Department's Career and Academic Planning webpage](#)

## Consider extension activities to deepen connections of content to career

- Research activities to learn more about the career or organization
- Presentation on a project related to the career path
- Coordinate an authentic project for the organization

## Photos/video from the event

- If you have pictures from the career immersion experience, share the pictures with the professional and your district or college
  - Make sure you have photo releases prior to sharing

- Publicizing the presentation demonstrates the value of the experience and the partnership with local industry

## Provide an extension to the experience

- Ask the professional to be a part of a classroom project or presentation
- Connect with the professional to develop an authentic project for students to see the content connection in solving a local organizational challenge
- Follow-up with the industry partners to see if they would be interested in hosting a worksite exploratory event or other experience

## Additional Preparation and Reflection Example Activities

### Example Student Preparation Activities

Research Activity in Preparation for the Career Immersion Experience (Possible Questions)

1. Professional's organization name and website
2. Organization's location
3. Organization's mission statement
4. What is the organization's primary product or service?
5. What departments exist within the organization?
6. Who are at least two competitors the organization the professional is employed with?
7. What are three questions you have about the organization, career path and/or professional that you would like to ask?

### Career Research Activity

1. Name of the career
2. Education/training required for this career path
3. Typical tasks/responsibilities in this career path
4. Skills required for success in this career
5. Related careers that interest you
6. Typical earnings in this career path
7. Projected job openings in Iowa for this career

### Example Student Reflection

Career Immersion Experience Reflection Activity (possible questions)

1. Student Name
2. Professional's Organization Name
3. What did you like about the career you experienced?
4. Would you consider a career in this field? Why or why not?
5. What did you learn that interested you about this career? What did you learn that did not interest you?
6. What knowledge or skills would you need to strengthen in order to be successful in a career like the one you experienced? Please explain.
7. Identify your next steps based on your experience. What courses are you interested in taking next? Are there related careers you would be interested in learning more about?