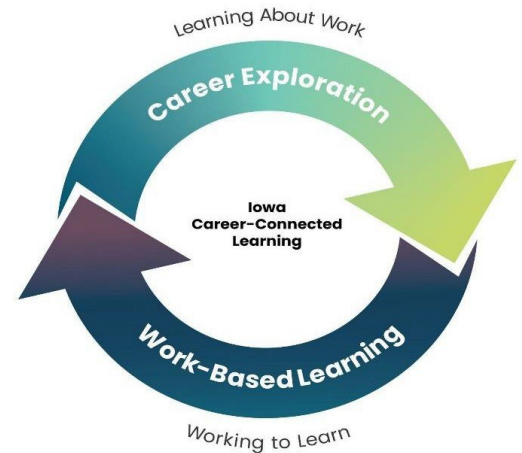


Worksite Exploratory Event Toolkit

Worksite exploratory event definition:

A worksite exploratory event is a **career exploration** experience where students tour a workplace to learn about careers, industry expectations, observe relevant work in progress and ask industry professionals questions. The worksite exploratory event is focused on a career pathway, offers an opportunity to learn in-depth about several careers on-site and includes an interactive session for the students to explore the career. The worksite exploration should be organized with small groups of students that rotate among industry experts to allow ample interaction for short informational interviews with industry experts.



Preparation for Worksite Exploratory Events

Make key decisions in planning the worksite exploratory event

- Identify which classes, courses or programs will be participating.
 - This provides the planning educators/instructors/coordinators/administrators/counselors with a good understanding of how many industry sites will be needed to accommodate the experience
 - This identifies the educators/instructors to involve in the planning process for the event
 - Consider small groups in order to encourage interaction with industry professionals
- Identify how the locations will be determined.
 - If it is for a particular course or program, the career pathways associated with the course or program will determine the organizations to seek out
 - If the focus is on connecting local opportunities, identify if the industry sites will be organized by career pathway (i.e. health care) or by those providing a broad range of career pathways available locally to students (i.e. marketing, computer programming)
- Identify and plan logistics.
 - Transportation
 - Follow district/college policies to plan accordingly and ensure transportation is not a barrier to accessing the educational opportunity
 - Off-site Policies
 - Review and follow all district/college off-site policies
 - Local Coverage
 - If the educator/instructor accompanying the students will need classroom/duty coverage while supporting the worksite exploratory event, review policies and make arrangements accordingly
 - Student Time
 - If the student will be missing other classes/courses to participate in the worksite exploratory event, assist by having internal conversations to support student participation
 - If the worksite exploratory event will take place during a meal hour, make arrangements with your local district/college kitchen/café accordingly to ensure students do not miss a meal in order to participate

Preprepare student learners to maximize career learning during the event

- The event planning team should provide a list of the industry sites and careers highlighted beforehand.
 - This will drive preparation activities for students in the classroom/course/program to provide age-appropriate career learning
 - Example preparation activities:
 - Read a book about the career (ideal for elementary students)
 - Watch a short video clip or longer video on the career
 - Watch a short video about the organization to learn more about what the organization does
 - Assign a career and/or organization research assignment
 - Share/investigate the organization's mission statements or the work they may do with the students
 - Use the list of participating organizations and careers to develop a support plan with educational staff to ensure all student needs and accommodations will be supported during the event
- Outline student expectations to ensure student success.
 - Professionalism
 - Use professionalism in behavior, communication and attire during the experience
 - Student participation expectations with the hands-on activities and rotation schedule
 - Questions students are to ask to demonstrate interest and understanding of the career
 - Prepare students ahead of time to write down a couple of questions they can ask
 - If the educator/instructor expects students to submit a completed assignment, activity or project from the event, provide the expectations and identify how students will submit their responses

Prepare supporting staff with information to support a successful event

- Identify staff who will be supporting students during the worksite exploratory event.
 - Based on student ages and small group sizes, plan accordingly for student support needs
- Communicate a schedule with all education staff and industry partners to ensure efficiency (on time and little congestion).
 - For rotations between careers while at one industry partner
 - For rotations between industry partners or sites/locations

Coordinate with the industry partners for a positive experience prior to visit

Logistics and Communication

- Communicate Logistics.
- Parking
 - Communicate the type of transportation used to transport students to the industry site and request information about parking
 - Building Entry
 - Request information on any special entry requirements to ensure a smooth process on the day of the event
- Number of internal site career rotations available/needed
 - Communicate the number of students attending and how student groups can be divided during the visit
- If there are limited rotations within the individual industry site, consider:
 - Dividing students into additional groups with neighboring industry partners to capitalize on walking between businesses to ease rotations and volume of student at an industry partner site at one time

Develop and execute a communication plan with all educators/instructors who will be the point(s) of contact

- If the primary planner will be utilizing other adult staff members for the experience, provide those names along with the rotation schedule for the industry partner(s)
- Relay expectations for the student's professional behavior and attire
- Finalize and confirm details of the event with the industry partners and site location
- Initial planning and final confirmation closer to the event

Plan an engaging experience to support learning goals.

- Career rotation expectations
 - A brief introduction from the industry professional on their career
 - If possible, a brief demonstration of the work they do
 - A sample final project/video that doesn't break internal confidentiality policies
 - A simulation of what they do
 - Provide five or less questions for industry professionals to address
 - Time for questions from students
- Hands-on/Engaging Activity
- The purpose of providing a hands-on activity is to engage learners in the career when possible
- Providing a hands-on activity may sound overwhelming for the industry partner. Alleviate their concerns by making some suggestions:
 - If there are materials or a finished product that can be shared, show this to students
 - If there is an interactive component that attending students can help produce
 - A simple, entry-level (and safe) activity the students can participate in
 - Consider using the partners own training materials or related activities
 - If the industry partner is unable to provide a safe hands-on activity for the students, consider follow-up activities in the classroom to provide the connection
- To enhance the experience, communicate key career components you would like the students to connect with
 - 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 Worksite Exploratory Event

Provide a simple checklist for the day of the event

- Provide a final schedule for the district/college staff, industry professionals and students to follow
- Clearly communicate the expectations:
 - Students
 - Industry Professionals
 - District/College Staff
- Review expectations of the student
 - Professionalism
 - Use professionalism in behavior, communication and attire during the experience
 - Student participation expectations with the hands-on activities and rotation schedule
 - Questions students are to ask to demonstrate interest and understanding of the career
 - If the educator/instructor wants to obtain the student responses, identify how students will submit their responses

- Outline educational expectations of the industry professional
 - Actively engage with student participants
 - Provide a list of no more than five informational interview questions and career information each industry professional should cover during each rotation
 - Bridge the experience to careers in the field
 - Be prepared to be responsive to student questions
- Provide expectations of the educator/instructor/staff
 - Ensure the logistics of the event are communicated and adhered to
 - What are the different roles and responsibilities for different individuals
 - Educators/Instructors
 - Educational Staff Supporting the Event
 - Who is the contact and what is the process for addressing questions during the experience?

After the Worksite Exploratory Events

Make note of the experience and collect feedback

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

Send thank you notes to the industry professionals and site hosts

- Encourage students to write a thank you note or a class/course/program thank you
 - This connects the value of the professional's time and provides an opportunity for students to practice professional skills

Connect the worksite exploratory event 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:

- 3-2-1 Strategy:
 - At the end of the experience, have students write or verbally reflect three things they did not know before the experience, two things that surprised them about the experience and one thing that they learned about their own career path from 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 organizations at the event
- Make the worksite exploratory event part of a project and have students use the information from the event to deliver a presentation at a later time
- Consider including some of the industry professionals from the event to listen to the presentations
- Coordinate additional work-based learning experiences with the industry party, such as:
 - Classroom Speakers
 - Job Shadow
 - Internship

Photos/video from the event

- If you have pictures from the worksite exploratory event experience, share the pictures with the professionals and your district/college
 - Make sure you have photo releases prior to sharing
 - Publicizing the worksite exploratory event 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 partner sites to generate interest in potentially hosting a future job shadow or student internship

Additional Preparation and Reflection Example Activities

Example Student Preparation Activities

Research activity in preparation for the worksite event experience (possible questions)

1. List three careers that will be shared during the worksite exploratory experience that you are interested in learning more about.
2. What organizations/businesses will be sharing the careers identified above?
3. If you wanted to pursue one of the careers that interest you, what steps will you need to take in the next two years? (classes, experiences, degrees, etc.)
4. List three questions you could ask one of the businesses during the event to learn more about the career.

Career Research Activity Related to Career Shared During Event

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

Example Informational Interview Questions

For the industry rotations during the worksite exploratory event, identify no more than five questions each industry professional should share on:

1. What is your title and main responsibilities in your current position?
2. Why did you decide to work in this industry?
3. What does a typical day at your organization look like?
4. Can you tell me what education and experiences led up to you obtaining your current position?
5. What are the most vital steps someone should take to prepare for a role like yours?
6. What accomplishments do you feel set you apart in this industry?
7. What new skills have you developed since taking this role?
8. What types of decisions do you make in your role?
9. What is your organizational culture like?

10. What is your favorite thing about your current career?
11. What is your least favorite thing about your current career?
12. Is there something you wish you would have known when you were younger that would help you in your current career?
13. What types of projects do you get to work on?
14. What are some of the greatest rewards you have experienced since obtaining your role?
15. Are you able to establish a work/life balance in your field?
16. Are you able to share some of the most difficult challenges you face in your role?
17. If you weren't in this position, what other positions would you be interested in pursuing?
18. Is there anything else you would like to share about your career or organization?

Example Student Reflection

Worksite exploratory event reflection activity (possible questions)

1. Student Name
2. Name of one of the careers you learned about:
3. What was interesting about the careers you learned about?
4. What was not interesting about the careers you learned about?
5. What skills do you need for the career you learned about? (for upper elementary/MS/HS students you could request what math and reading/writing skills are needed for the career)
6. What technology was used in the workplace?
7. What did you notice about the work environment that is different than what you would have expected?
8. What was the most memorable part of the experience?
9. Would you consider a career in this field? Why or why not?