

Module 8: Company workplace challenge

Facilitator's guide

A workplace challenge is a career preparation activity where students engage in solving a real-world problem or a challenge set or faced by an employer. As the facilitating employer, the workplace challenge is an opportunity to gain a new perspective from young minds, harness their creativity and may lead to tangible outcomes.

Where possible, students work as a team (3-5 students per team) to identify possible solutions. They then create and deliver a presentation on their solutions. Workplace challenges are educationally rich, and help students connect what they are learning in school / college with the workplace.

Workplace challenges are designed to:

- Provide exposure to potential careers in an industry of interest
- Develop problem-solving and research skills
- Develop teamwork and presentation skills
- Help students make the connection between school / college and the workplace

What makes an effective workplace challenge?

- ✓ A real or simulated problem. A range of problems can be set where appropriate to offer choice to students
- ✓ Effective group selection in advance of the challenge launch
- ✓ Collaboration with an educator to sense check the problem and time allocation
- ✓ A problem with a range of possible solutions
- ✓ Students have access to resources or information relevant to the problem
- ✓ A midpoint for questions, employer feedback that enables students to modify solutions (Module 11: Employer Feedback)
- ✓ An employer audience to present solutions to, who offer feedback (Module 11: Employer Feedback)

Examples of workplace challenges

- How can we get more young people to engage with the help desk at the Council?
- Develop a database to help us to monitor and track our markets
- Develop a social media marketing campaign to help us widen our customer base
- We have 6000 employees and car-parking facilities for 2000. Help us to develop strategies to ensure our facilities provide adequate parking for our staff
- Review and provide suggestions on how we can improve our company website

Delivery guide

Prior to launching the specific workplace challenge use the Student Resource Pack to highlight the links to the world of work and the benefits of participating.

The company workplace challenge can be launched face-to-face or virtually, using a pre-recorded video produced by the employer or in written format e.g. PowerPoint.

It is important for the educator and employer to liaise and agree timescales, points and method of contact e.g. midpoint feedback and final presentations (Module 11: Employer feedback). In addition, ensure that any supporting resources or information required for the workplace challenge are accessible and appropriate.

It is suggested that students complete Module 4 (Teamwork), Module 6 (Problem-solving) and Module 7 (Effective Project Management), before starting to work on solutions, as these modules aim to equip students with skills to work effectively over the duration of the workplace challenge. Prior to presenting solutions to the employer or audience it is suggested that students complete Module 10 (Pitching and presenting) which aims to help students develop relevant skills.