

## WBL Connector Workplace Challenge Checklist

Quick tips for Work-Based Learning Connectors<sup>1</sup> to ensure a successful workplace challenge.

### Before the Workplace Challenge

- Identify all interested teachers, help them plan their challenges. Share the Teacher/Faculty Tip Sheet.
- Work with the teacher/faculty to recruit and team students, create learning objectives and work with students/learners to prepare for the challenge.
- Design the challenge with the employer and teacher, making sure that it's one the students/learners can potentially address, and that teachers/faculty can support. Typically, the employer presents a number of possible problems or issues that might constitute the challenge and you can help select and develop one that's a good fit with the current focus in the classroom. Selection should also reflect the interests of participating students/learners and the availability of resources to support addressing the challenge.
- Encourage the employer to identify a real-world problem or issue—one that the industry is facing today. Make it real.
- Develop a timeline for the challenge. Include when and where it will be issued, the time set aside in the regular schedule for students/learners to address the challenge, scheduled "touch" points with the challenge host, and when and where the solution presentation will take place.
- Distribute and collect appropriate forms.
- Address any additional logistical issues such as transportation, safety gear or access to equipment and tools.
- Determine the employer's preferred form and frequency of contact and define an ongoing communication strategy and feedback protocols for the challenge.

### During the Workplace Challenge

- Observe and meet with students/learners as they address the challenge. Make sure they're engaged in the challenge and interacting with the employer as appropriate.
- Share the Work-Readiness Competencies with the workplace challenge hosts.
- Support the challenge host in preparing to receive the presentation on the solution(s) to the challenge.

### After the Workplace Challenge

- Document the workplace challenge. Review feedback from employers, teachers/faculty and students/learners and summarize results. Make recommendations for improvements.
- Help students/learners update their career development plan and think about any next steps they would like to take to further their career goals.

### Sample Workplace Challenge Timeline

**Beginning of the school year:** Identify interested teachers/faculty and brainstorm business partners who could participate.

**One month in advance:** Invite business partners to participate. Design the challenge with employer and teacher.

**One week in advance:** Send employers logistics and address any questions.

**During challenge:** Observe the presentation and the challenge process in the classroom. Help teachers/faculty and employers support the activity.

**At end of challenge:** Observe the solution presentation (ideally at worksite), engage in dialogue and receive feedback on the approach.

**Note:** While it's desirable to bookend the challenge with visits to the company, take care to minimize the impact on small- to medium-sized organizations.

<sup>1</sup> This includes Earn & Learn work-based learning connectors and others who facilitate, arrange and support work-based learning activities for students/learners.



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## Work-Based Learning Toolset Workplace Challenge Guide

- Work with teachers/faculty to coordinate “go deeper” activities to connect the workplace challenge to the classroom.
- Send thank-you notes to employers and identify possible next steps with the employer.
- Take pictures from the workplace challenge and provide them to the companies for their websites or newsletters. Ensure you have signed releases for all photos.
- Publicize the workplace challenge and the businesses that participated by placing a story in the local newspaper or posting on the school or agency webpage.
- Consider other potential public relations benefits and opportunities.