

HOW TO DELIVER SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL MOCK INTERVIEWS

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SOUTH BROMSGROVE HIGH SCHOOL

WHY RUN VIRTUAL MOCK INTERVIEWS?

Face to face mock interviews give students the opportunity to experience what a real-life interview will be like when they apply for post 16 education or future jobs. When mock interviews are delivered by external employers, students are made to leave their comfort zone and interact with people who they are not familiar with. This activity will not only provide them with the experience of what a "REAL" interview is like, but it will also help them to develop important life and communication skills.

During the period where the COVID 19 pandemic had an impact on education establishments, facilitating face to face mock interviews may have no longer been deemed as a viable career activity option to undertake. Careers leaders were required to think outside the box and come up with alternative ways to deliver mock interviews to ensure their students still gained this valuable experience.

This guide aims to provide you with details of a tried and tested method created by South Bromsgrove High School, of how a Mock Interview session can be adapted and delivered virtually while still providing students with a meaningful experience.

DID YOU KNOW?

Worcestershire employers are keen to support local educational establishments with careers activity virtually. This means students don't have to miss out these vital employer encounters.

Speak to your assigned Enterprise Co-Ordinator who will be able to put you in touch with local and supportive employers who are willing to support the delivery of your mock interviews, or other similar careers related activities taking place in your school.



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TOP TIPS:

Your mock interview day might not be able to be delivered as you would usually, but that doesn't mean you have to cancel the activity completely.

Use the top tips from South Bromsgrove's experience to see if you could carry out the activity virtually:

- 1.** Book a computer room or laptop hire for 8 hours (split over a day and a half) and run the mock interviews more than a week apart. This split session approach gives you the opportunity to pick up any students who miss the first session and allow those students who were sceptical, time to receive the positive impact feedback from their peers.

Please note: 8 hours is a guide based on 330 students receiving a virtual interview.
- 2.** Ensure any students who may need additional support have early attendance slots
- 3.** Allow 20 minutes per interview, this will provide time for any technical difficulties that arise and give substantial time for the questions to be asked to students and feedback to be given by the employer
- 4.** Ensure each computer/laptop has head sets and webcams – if they do not, you can purchase them at a relatively low cost (the expensive versions aren't needed!)
- 5.** Ensure you have twice as many headsets as needed so as you are able to sanitise them between students. Remove all wind mufflers beforehand to facilitate this.
- 6.** Headsets are necessary as the mics on the webcams pick up all of the local noise.
- 7.** If the computer webcam is wide angle, select a virtual background so as only the student is in view (these are available for free if using Microsoft Teams)
- 8.** Create dummy logins for each PC so as they can have their own Microsoft Teams accounts.
- 9.** Create Teams meetings, enough for all the PC's being used and invite the dummy accounts to the meetings, and then invite the external interviewers to the meetings also. This will mean that once the PC is turned on, the meeting can start and run all day with the interviewers dropping in and out when it is their agreed time to interview students.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

1. Make sure all your external interviewers know the virtual platform you will be using and have their invitation beforehand so as they can ensure any software needed is downloaded onto their computers.
2. Be prepared that when headphones are changed over/re plugged in, the software may need reminding to use the headset and not the webcam for sound so ensure staff members are confident about how to change the settings.
3. Interviews can be recorded live for safeguarding, and staff members can join any interviews taking place at any time

ENGAGING EMPLOYERS:

If you are looking to engage employers to support virtual activities, consider the following:

1. Can you Enterprise Adviser help? They may be able to draw on their colleagues and networks
2. Contact your Enterprise Coordinator, they will be able to let you know of any employers who may be willing to support
3. Search employer pledge cards in your local area on www.skills4worcestershire.co.uk

Many thanks to SOUTH BROMSGROVE HIGH SCHOOL for sharing their experience. Read their activity Case Study below:

DATE

[Redacted]

SCHOOL

South Bromsgrove High

EVENT/ACTIVITY NAME

Virtual Mock Interviews

WRITE UP

An interviewer who took part in South Bromsgrove High School's mock interview day for Year 11 said that the concept, and standard of the students, had set the benchmark for others to follow.

In previous years, representatives from local business and enterprise have visited the school to conduct one-to-one interviews so that all 335 Y11 students could experience and practice in what can be quite a stressful situation. This year, with COVID restrictions in place, the school moved the whole exercise online. Students joined the interviewers for a video call lasting up to 20 minutes that included questions, feedback on performance and advice for the future.

The students said the experience was of great benefit to them and they got a lot of pointers of how to improve, such as learning to sell themselves better and to develop the examples they use to demonstrate their personal qualities. Most started off a bit nervous but warmed to the exercise and ended up taking away a big boost to their confidence.

Mr Clark, Careers Lead said, "We are so grateful for the interviewers who have volunteered their time to support our students in this way. It is always an invaluable exercise in giving the students a chance to practice their interview skills, especially in the new normal of online working. This cohort missed out on their job shadowing opportunity last summer, due to lockdown, so it has been very important to give them the chance to learn how to conduct themselves in an unknown situation."

The school's careers programme will be utilising online video later in the year with alumni talks for the Sixth Form and employer "visits" for Year 9.

DISTRICT

Bromsgrove

NUMBERS ATTENDED

335

PHOTOS



South Bromsgrove High

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