

# Top tips & best practice for virtual engagement

*From our own virtual delivery to students over the last few months, we have compiled some tips and ideas to assist employers in conceptualising and developing their own virtual engagement with our students and recent alumni here at King's*

What is the purpose of this interaction?

Is this designed for live delivery or to be reviewed on demand?

Is this activity accessible to the broadest group of students regarding technological capability or time zones?

## Preparing for your virtual session

### 1. Consider the purpose your event is trying to achieve

- Is this about direct recruitment and understanding of your organisation to boost quantity or quality of your direct applications and/or roles or an attempt to facilitate broader education about your sector, the market, specific skills, attributes or inclusion initiatives?
- What are you hoping attendees will get from the activity? How should they think, feel and what action will they take as a result of engaging with you?
- You may want to frame some intended learning outcomes to help determine how to develop your plans, heighten student understanding and engagement and whether your eventual event met the objectives you set for delivery

### 2. Consider the technology platform

- What platform provides you with the best engagement opportunity?
  - Is it accessible? *Can participants use closed captions/subtitles? Is it available globally?*
  - Are you looking to capture or record the activity? *How will that change your engagement with participants, or the type of structure you might suggest?*
  - Does the platform allow you to easily share recordings or content after the event?
  - Does the platform allow you to share a ring-fenced link, or can anyone register?
  - Does the platform securely hold participants' details? *Is it GDPR-compliant?*
  - Does the platform allow for all participants to share content or speak, or simply presenters?

### 3. Consider the resource

- Virtual events can be resource-intensive in human capital also – most events require at least two facilitators or producers
  - Have you considered how to split up who is doing what?
  - Do you need to consider what training and preparation is required on the platform?
  - If you're considering break-out rooms, you may need facilitators in each room

#### 4. Consider your structure

- Once you know what you're trying to achieve, which platform allows you to do so and what resource you have, consider how to structure your event
  - Do you need to specifically schedule breaks for participants?
  - How do you ensure your participants are aware of the structure at the top of the event?
  - How long is the event going to last? We suggest no more than 60 minutes with adequate breaks.
  - Is the structure conducive to asynchronous delivery (i.e. pre-recorded)? *Will it make sense?*

### During your virtual session

- Set expectations for the event - suggest attendees turn off their microphones and video and submit questions in the chat, or perhaps keep their cameras on if this is integral to developing rapport and interactive elements of the workshop
- It is advised that long conversations that are not presentations/webinars and are informal are not recorded.
  - Recording can inhibit participation during the live event
  - Long recordings are hard to navigate after the event to identify the salient points
  - Recording can increase engagement after the live event has finished
- If you are recording the session, only record the presentation part and end recording before moving to questions
  - Be clear to those attending that you are recording and when you will stop recording
- Be prepared for different engagement from our audiences – we encourage employers to deliver interactive, skills-based or group workshops but have found that in the early stages of digital engagement, some students find these more challenging to navigate or participate in
  - Therefore, ensure you have alternative plans should you encounter reticence to participate in these elements - we have found many students feel uncomfortable interacting in virtual sessions.
  - Be prepared to use polls, chat for questions and other ways to interact with students that does not require them to take part in a discussion
- Participants may also feel it is harder to 'jump in' on a virtual chat when others are talking, so it is important to manage the conversation to allow all participants an opportunity to contribute should they wish
- If presenting slides, make these available to the students through a weblink or in the chat
- At the end, state in the chat that the session is now ending and perhaps add an email for students if they wish to follow up

Last Updated: October 2020