

S7 Visits Programme

Visits to other Colleges can be a hugely informative and valuable exercise for all parties given proper preparation, due professionalism and clear expectations. This outline suggests a loose format that might enable S7 staff to get best value from an S7 Visit.

1) Setting Up An Opportunity

The S7 website at www.s7colleges.com should be your one-stop-shop for arranging a visit to another S7 College. There is a dedicated section of this site, called *Visits and Exchanges* for arranging an S7 Visit, where you can key in the opportunity you are looking for and can specify preferred dates or days of the week and await a host partner 'match'. The process will then be tracked through for you from the S7 website with email alerts at appropriate points.

2) Setting the date/s

The date chosen should be one when the host is able to arrange cover for a substantial part of the day in order to spend time with the S7 visitor. If this is a teaching and learning visit, it should also be a date on which a range of learning experiences are taking place within the area to provide a potential observation offer to the visiting S7 colleague. Once a date has been agreed: stick to it!

3) Preparing Effectively

In order to maximise the benefit from a Visit, it would be sensible for the visitor to alert the host College well in advance to the type of areas it would be useful to see during the time. For cross-college roles, this might be quite complex to do with understanding processes and procedures rather than just straight forward observation or information gathering

4) Drawing Up A Programme

Where there are issues of particular interest to a visiting colleague, for example library provision, embedding of ICT, admissions policies etc, it would be a good idea to plan a schedule for the Visit/s to include coverage of these areas and to have a chance to talk to other staff in the college whose work might be of significance. It may well be that some lesson observation is a priority for a teaching and learning visitor, in which case, this will need to be thought about and discussed in advance. Other likely requests might include a tour of area resources and wider college resources where appropriate, and time with the host department team head, perhaps to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern. Obviously, this is by no means intended as a prescription, only as an indication of the details that might be thought through in order to maximise the learning experience.

10) Following Up

With luck and good preparation, the Visit will prove hugely valuable, perhaps not only to the visitor, but also to the host department. It may well be that both parties would like to maintain contact and swap ideas going forward: indeed, if there is a particular project that the host could provide ongoing input and support for, it would be well worth approaching S7 to see what further facilitation could be available.

11) Evaluation Form

A very brief follow-up analysis of your Visit will be requested for your staff development records in the hope that we can establish this type of experience as a funding priority going forwards, based on its value to staff.

Wishing you a very successful experience with your S7 Visit!