

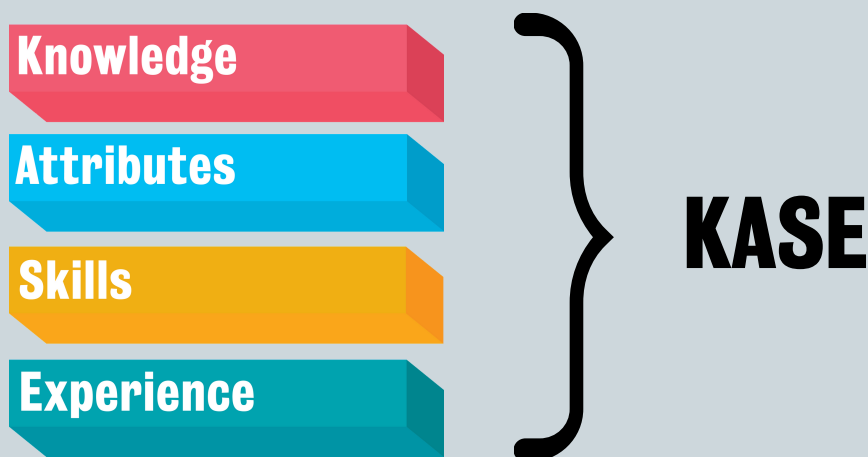
## Virtual Events Toolkit: Top tips & best practice

*Building on our own exploration and feedback on virtual engagement, 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*

### Preparing for your virtual session

#### 1. Why? Consider the purpose of your interaction

- Is the purpose about direct recruitment, understanding of your organisational culture, your opportunities, a broader awareness of key changes in your sector, an exploration of individual's experiences or facilitating broader education or upskilling of our audience's knowledge, attributes, skills or experiences?
- Are you hoping to improve the quality of your applications, increase the quantity of your applications through greater brand presence, myth-bust some expectations or target specific groups of our audience?
- You may wish to consider using our KASE Framework (below) to help our audience understand how your activity supports their employability:



- 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. Where? Consider the technology platform

There are many platforms available to support virtual activity – from Zoom to Microsoft Teams, Google Meet to Adobe Connect, LiveStorm and many more...

- 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?
- Can you test the platform ahead of your event?
  - The virtual environment provides many pitfalls – have you scheduled time to rehearse and get to grips with the platform you'll be using?

We can support employers with access to our MS Teams, MS Teams Live, or Adobe Connect platforms through supported events, if that is of interest to your organisation.



### 3. Who? Consider the resource

- Dependent upon your planned activity, you'll need to consider who is best to develop, deliver and engage our audience – if you're discussing direct recruitment, perhaps this is a member of your HR or recruitment teams. Conversely, if you're discussing what life is really like day-to-day, a member of your organisation in that role might be best appropriate, or if you're exploring your diversity and inclusion initiatives, we suggest ensuring that those with lived experiences are participating to provide that direct understanding.
- Our audience value interaction from senior representatives – it demonstrates the commitment your organisation is making to its graduate talent, however, feedback from students suggests that more valuable are insights from recent graduates – or King's alumni – who can provide a more direct insight into the hiring process and the roles our audience may be undertaking.
- Your commitment to an inclusive and diverse working environment is recognised by us in the interactions and discussions we have with our many employer partners – and we recognised we all have more to do to vocalise and action this commitment – whatever activity you undertake, ensure that you are fully representing the diversity of your organisation through those undertaking the activity, not just by talking about it.
- 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. How? 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 45-55 minutes with adequate breaks.
- Is the event formal, or does it provide moments for less scripted interactions?
- 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
  - Be conscious that our audience may encounter different problems with their technical set-up – perhaps their bandwidth is poor, or they may not have a private space to engage in the activity so may have distractions in the vicinity to them.
  - For some individuals, it may be that they are self-conscious of their environment or showing this on camera to a potential employer or other participants – encourage them to make use of virtual backgrounds or create their own King's branded background to equip them with a more professional persona.
- 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



## During Your Virtual Session, continued

- 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.

*Updated April 2021*

