

# Contents of the Green Careers Excursion Toolkit

This resource forms part of the **Green Careers Excursion Toolkit** that includes a number of guides and resources to support planning the **Green Careers Excursion** and **Hosting the Job Shadow Experience**.

Planning your Green Careers Excursion

Hosting the Job Shadow Experience

Green Professionals Directory

Green Career Cards

Green Careers Flash Stick with print ready files for posters and career cards and a Power Point Template

Careers Decision Making Tool Flash Stick

Exploring Careers for Biodiversity CD



## Planning your Green Careers Excursion

The **Green Careers Excursion** is an innovative way to expose students to potential employers and careers in the field. The ultimate aim being to support students to access work for biodiversity. During the excursion students visit various employers and spend time with professionals in the field through a mini job shadow programme to experience work in these careers first hand.

Suggestions and resources are offered in the **Green Careers Excursion Toolkit** as a guide to plan your excursion and provide students with information through which to gain access and develop productive careers for biodiversity.

# Planning the Excursion

The **Green Professionals Directory** provides information about employers and professionals who could host students for a mini job shadow experience on careers for biodiversity. Employers are listed regionally for ease of reference.

Consider the careers that your students are most interested in exploring. Have this discussion during class and identify employers and careers to include in your excursion.

Ideally you would want to arrange the excursion over five days, possibly from Monday to Friday and using the weekend for travel that might be required. A minimum of five careers is suggested to include in your excursion and no more than 10 careers as a focus. Between five and 10 careers allows a focus on at least one career per day or at most two.

If you have a bigger group of students, arrange for two careers per day with one employer. Split the group into two. Group one spends half the day with one professional and group two with another. Swap the groups after lunch.



Once you have identified careers and employers of interest to your students, contact the organization and professionals using the contact details in the **Green Professionals Directory**. Whereas these organizations and professionals have agreed to be listed in the directory the final decision to host your excursion still has to be made in consultation with them.

Start with an email request. This is often an easier way to reach most professionals. Timous notice and confirmation will ensure success in securing your host organizations.

Explain the referral through the GreenMatter Biodiversity Careers for University Students Programme in your first approach.

# Timing the Excursion

Because the **Green Careers Excursion** is a time intensive activity, the semester break in June / July of the academic year might be the best time. This limits interference with class and teaching time and also provides a good lead time to plan the excursion.



# Selecting the Students

It is not always possible to include the entire student group. University lecturers are best suited to select students for participation.

Criteria you might want to consider:

- Subject specialisation, for example an honours class specialising in conservation management. The excursion can then focus on this particular career field. If you have three streams of specialisation, arrange a specific excursion for each group for example one focused on water resource management, another on conservation management and a third on bioinformatics.
- Academic level could guide selection. Final year students exploring employment opportunities, second year students exploring potential placements for experiential learning, honours students in a specialist stream for conservation management or conservation research, for example.
- Academic diligence is a common selection criteria in a university context. This could be the top achievers or those students with much dedication to academic success, for example.
- Special consideration could include students who need career guidance, who are undecided on an area of specialisation or students most isolated geographically from potential employers.

# Logistics Excursion

The Green Careers Excursion is an exciting career guidance opportunity and involves much planning. Some logistics to consider:

## Route Planning

Use a map to mark out the location of employers you will visit. Consider mileage between employers as you plot the route. Choose a circular route to limit the time spent travelling between employers. If your route is straight visit some employers on the outbound journey and others on the inbound journey. Or choose an excursion that goes to a central location and drive out each day to various employers. Write out an itinerary for ease of reference and for communication as you plan the excursion with your students and staff.

## Meals

In addition to basic meals think also about in between and night time snacks. Packed lunches work well when travelling over the lunch period. Make provision for those with special dietary requirements. Sponsorship, for example through local supermarkets might be a consideration for meals. You could also buy the food required and get students to prepare meals through the day. This arrangement though takes time away from the careers programme and would require self-catering accommodation. It is likely however to save costs.

## Communication

Give all students clear communication about the excursion, including the itinerary, departure and expected arrival times, accommodation, distances, etc. Provide students with a list of requirements that could include for example, comfortable walking shoes, sun hats, warm clothes, torches if you are planning for night time activities.



## Transport

Most universities have their own transport and require advanced booking. In the absence of university transport you might want to explore sponsorship.

## Accommodation

Identify suitable accommodation where you are likely to stay over night. Cost is a significant consideration. You could consider dormitory styled accommodation. Excursions over the June / July break could increase accommodation options at schools and universities. Ask your host employer to advise on suitable, low cost accommodation in close proximity. For the brave hearted, negotiate preferential accommodation rates with some of the employers who have accommodation options.

## Indemnity

All universities have their own systems of indemnity. Make sure that you do all the necessary to comply with these requirements.

## Chaperone

Ensure that one or more of your academic staff accompany students at all times. The host employers offer much time for these excursions. The responsibility of the students remains your own.



## Budgeting

Given the planning checklist above, it becomes evident that the Green Careers Excursion is likely to be costly. Think about applying to your faculty or department for the necessary budget. You could support fundraising for the excursion. You could also think about a financial contribution from students. This could however disadvantage the student with less financial resources. A detailed budget will help the financial planning for your excursion.

# Briefing the Host

The **Green Careers Excursion** is intended to provide opportunities for students to engage actively with careers in the field. Drawing on the **Hosting the Job Shadow Experience** resource in your toolkit, encourage your host employer and professionals to engage students in activities around these careers. This might include for example, a GIS Technician allowing students to input data into GIS software systems, an Ecologist getting students to collect data in the field or participate in laboratory testing or an Environmental Manager guiding students through commenting on one or more development application. One half of a day or in some cases a full day would require a mix of activities that could include introductions to careers, a walk around the employer facilities, engaging in work related activities and rounding off with reflections and a question and answer session, for example. It might be useful to plan the visit to each employer carefully to ensure that students' engagement with the employer and professional is maximised.

Some resources that might assist you to plan the excursion in more detail include:



**The Hosting the Job Shadow Experience** resource that you can either pass on to your host or draw on to brief the host organization and employer.



A **Power Point Template** that could be used for introductions is available in the toolkit. If used, suggest that the host insert personal career and learning pathway development stories. Because students relate well to slides that are more visual and less text heavy, they should use many pictures as possible and video clips work well to bring the career to life.



**The Exploring Careers for Biodiversity CD** that can be used to introduce the broad spectrum of careers ahead of or during the excursion. This resource could be used to set the scene and provide students with career options in broad biodiversity career fields, like Conservation Research, Policy and Governance, Conservation Management, Conservation Planning and Conservation Outreach, Education and Extension.



**23 Green Career Cards** are provided as a 'take home' resource for students. Hand these out at the start of the excursion. It could make for good reading material on a long drive. Or conclude the excursion with handing these out. Distribute these either in the full set or only the career fields included in your excursion.

This resource has been developed as part of the Biodiversity Careers for University Students Programme. Led by the World Wide Fund for Nature in South Africa (WWF-SA) this programme contributes to the sector wide GreenMatter Initiative to develop skills for biodiversity in South Africa.

Aimed ultimately at enabling access and use of biodiversity careers information amongst university students to support decision making about careers and learning pathways, this programme is structured around four key career guidance initiatives:

**Green Careers Excursion** taking a group of students to visit to various employers for biodiversity to experience green careers in the field and / or workspace

**Green Guest Lectures** with professionals in biodiversity visiting campuses and presenting guest lectures on green careers

**Green Careers Lounge** providing an informal space for students to meet and interact with professionals for biodiversity

**Green Open Days and Career Centres** providing resources and information on green careers

These initiatives will be piloted at selected universities through collaboration between WWF-SA and university constituents including academic staff, career counselling and development staff and student associations.

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