

What is Job Shadowing?

Job shadowing is a career exploration activity where students or job seekers spend time with a professional currently working in their career field of interest. A job shadowing experience will help you gather information to make a more informed career decision.

Reasons to Participate in Job Shadowing

- You can “test out” possible career options and gain insight about required training or education.
- You can begin to build a network with professionals in your career field.
- You can obtain real world career advice and knowledge.
- You can explore different companies, and become acquainted with new technologies related to your field of interest.
- You can learn which career fields you might be better suited for earlier and avoid wasting time and money on areas that are not a match.

How to Set Up a Job Shadowing Experience

- Find someone who is working in your chosen career field—ask friends, family or professors to introduce you to someone, or use LinkedIn to identify connections.
- Contact professionals by phone or email. Introduce yourself, explain the purpose of your request, and ask for times that would work in their schedule.

Tips for Job Shadowing

- Develop a list of questions on topics you want to learn more about and bring the list with you.
- Map out the location. Make sure you know where you’re going and arrive 5-10 minutes early!
- Take time to research the employer before you go—it is important for you to have some background knowledge about the employer, what they do, and their mission/values.
- Dress appropriately for the job shadowing situation. If you’re not sure what to wear, ask as you are setting up the job shadowing experience.
- Take a notebook and pen to take notes and write down important contact information.
- Make a good first impression—introduce yourself, make eye contact, shake hands and smile.
- Don’t be afraid to ask questions! You are there to learn.
- Thank the professional before you leave—send a thank you note or email following the experience.