



Job Shadowing Overview

General Description

A job shadowing experience is a short-term, non-credit, unpaid experience which enables a student to explore a particular industry, career or employer site. Further, the experience allows a student to participate in observation, gain exposure to industry culture, and network with professionals. Job shadowing enables a student to experience “the day in a life” of a particular field.

Desired Learning Development Outcomes

- Exploration and a better understanding of a particular industry, occupation or employer
- Understanding of the strengths and challenges of a particular industry, occupation or employer
- Networking practice and the enhancement of networking skills
- The identification of one or more potential employers in a desired field
- Utilization of information gathered to make an educated decision regarding pursuit of a particular industry, occupation or employer
- Further development of “career readiness” skills through interactions which took part in the job shadowing experience

Format Options

A job shadowing experience typically lasts for six hours in a single day. Typically, students are scheduled to shadow from 10am-4pm to give their host unencumbered work time at the beginning and end of the day.

Specific Activities Covered

Job shadowing enables an employer to expose a student to a variety of perspectives within an organization and can include many components. Standard components typically include the following:

- Overview of organization, mission and functions
- Tour of the organization’s facilities
- Overview of the organizational chart and introduction to leadership
- Observation rotations in different functional areas of the organization
- Opportunities to meet various staff members in various roles
- Question and answer sessions
- Student reflection via discussion or a reflection paper

Sample Job Shadowing Agenda:

- 10am Student arrives
Host provides a tour of the facilities and introduces the student to key staff
- 11am Host introduces the profession, industry and/or organization
Host allows the student to observe the daily routine
- 12pm Break for lunch
Host introduces student to coworkers and colleagues
- 1pm Host allows the student to shadow a professional in another area of interest
- 2pm Student accompanies the host to a team meeting or similar group activity
- 3pm Time is set aside time for the student to conduct an information interview

Sample topics for the student to ask/host to address:

- How your education and experience relate to your current position
- Courses that may be helpful for the student to take to succeed in this company/industry
- Licenses or certifications required for this company/industry
- Company/industry growth potential, current trends in the industry
- Advice for someone entering the field

- 4pm Job shadowing comes to a close

Benefits to Employer

While a job shadowing experience does not provide deliverables to an employer, it does represent an important service to the educational community from the area workforce. In addition, employers may benefit in the following ways:

- Spurring of interest in a particular industry among future generations of employees
- Development of a potential pipeline of candidates from qualified applicants
- Marketing and name recognition among the area community as well as local colleges and universities
- An opportunity to collect new perspectives and ideas from students regarding processes, organizational branding, and more

Benefits to Students

Job shadowing serves as an attractive alternative to students who desire to explore a specific career field but are unable to make the time commitment necessary for an internship. This exploratory experience enables students to do the following:

- Explore a particular industry and experience the “day in a life” of a designated career field
- Gather information on an industry culture, lifestyle, norms, and expectations
- Networking and “face time” with potential employers
- Professional development
- Expert insights regarding strengths, challenges, and potential career trajectories in a particular field

Compensation

Typically, a job shadowing experience is unpaid and does not qualify for academic credit.

Evaluation Process

The employer will be asked to complete a survey through which they can reflect upon their experience, evaluate the professionalism of their student, and make recommendations for change. The student will be asked to complete a survey reflecting on the benefits gained from participating in the experience and recommended improvements to the program.