



Career ConneXions Program: Job Shadowing

What is Job Shadowing?

Job shadowing is where a visitor/guest (in this case a student) has the opportunity to observe and gain experience in the business, industry, and role of another individual, and gain an insight into that particular work area.

Benefits of Job Shadowing?

Job shadowing provides the visitor/guest with a unique opportunity to find out how a business operates, how different positions with a company work together, and what skills and experience are needed for a particular role within a company. It develops a deeper knowledge and understanding of careers, functions, and roles within a company. By engaging in job shadowing individuals will be able to:

- See how staff and teams work.
- Gain insight into the roles and responsibilities of positions at a company.
- Reflect and learn from seeing work 'in action'.
- See the application of academic knowledge in various industries.
- Have a way of "testing out" possible college degree and career options.

Who is involved in Job Shadowing?

The host

A host is the person who agrees to be shadowed. This role does involve some preparation and thought and is not just about having someone follow you around for an agreed time span. A host needs to consider if the time requested is the best time for the shadowing to take place and how long each period of shadowing should be for. They will also need to take into consideration their work obligations and ensure that the shadowing experience does not get in the way of their day to day responsibilities.

The visitor/guest

A visitor/guest needs to consider why they are doing the shadowing and, what they hope to achieve. They will also need to do some preparation which will involve working with the host prior to the shadowing to set objectives for the sessions. Following the shadowing it is important to review and discuss outcomes and what happens next.

The framework for the shadow 'day':

As a visitor/guest you will spend the agreed period of time observing the day to day work of your host. This may involve a range of activities such as attending meetings, watching interactions with customers, etc. In fact it should be a typical representation of what the “host” individual does on a daily basis. This type of shadowing works best when a visitor/guest is looking to gain a greater understanding of what the host’s job role actually consists of. The host will provide opportunities for questions and a de-brief to ensure that both parties benefit from the shadowing.

What do I need to think about? Some practical considerations

The Host	The Visitor/Guest
When is the best time for a guest to get a good overview of the role?	What do I want to know about the job?
What do I need to inform the guest of prior to the shadowing?	What questions do I want to ask?
Do I need to let anyone else know that the shadowing is taking place?	What do you want to know about the team/ department?
What does the visitor/guest hope to get from the process?	Are there any specific tasks or elements of the job you would like to see above all others?
What do I need to know about them?	What do I know already about this job/department/team?
Do I need to complete any health & safety requirements prior to the visit?	Are there any special requirements (such as dress code)?
Do they have any additional support requirements that I need to be aware of?	What will I do as a result of this shadowing? (including how I will feed the learning back to my school)

Practical Tips for Hosts:

- Target 3-4 hours for the event (2 hours of observation + 1 hour debrief over lunch)
- 3-4 People to meet and/or roles to discuss is ideal
- Leverage visual learning environments (eg manufacturing, labs, etc.) where relevant and possible
- Be prepared for many different personality types (eg quiet, shy, talkative, confused, nervous)

A visitor/guest should:

- Be polite, tactful, professional, and attentive
- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Provide your host with feedback and reflections on what you have observed
- Ensure that you inform your host if you are unavailable for any reason
- Learn as much as you can prior to the shadowing, for example, reviewing the company’s website
- While on the shadowing take notes, you may come away with a useful list of numbers, emails, facts, thoughts and observations. Reflecting on these notes following the experience will allow you to maximize your learning

- Make sure you discuss any disability or dietary requirements with your host in advance of the placement, so that the host has enough time to put adjustments in place in order to maximize the benefits of the shadowing

A host should:

- Provide the visitor/guest with a timetable for when the shadowing will take place
- Ensure other colleagues are briefed about the shadowing experience
- Provide time between sessions or prior to sessions for questions and feedback
- Provide the visitor/guest with information on the team /department
- Provide appropriate notice if the shadowing activity must be cancelled or changed in any way
- Provide constructive feedback to the visitor/guest
- Should ensure they discuss any disability or dietary requirements with visitor/guest in advance of the placement, to ensure there is enough time to put adjustments in place in order to maximize the benefits of the experience