

Job Shadowing Guide

Job shadowing is when you partner with a professional to “shadow” them at their workplace. It is **temporary unpaid exposure to the workplace** in an occupational area of interest. You will observe the employee to understand the nuances of a job, work environment, duties, interactions with customers/colleagues, skills in practice and potential career options. Job shadowing helps increase your career awareness and reinforces the link between classroom learning and work requirements.

While the **purpose of job shadowing** is to gather career related info, it also allows you to build interviewing skills, become aware of the trends in the field and build your network. Multiple job shadowing experiences will allow you to explore a variety of occupations especially if you are hoping to declare a major, job searching or changing careers. You decide your purpose and what you want to accomplish.

A job shadowing experience may:

- Present facts about an occupation that can help you make a major/career decision.
- Provide you with a better/realistic perspective of the job requirements.
- Expose you to the actual work environment/climate of the workplace.
- Assist in developing communication skills as you talk with professionals.
- Give you an edge with inside info that would help with future interviews.
- Establish valuable network contacts that could lead to internship/job opportunities.

Who to approach:

- **Contact someone you know.** Check with family/friends to see if they know anyone who could help.
- **Send a cold outreach email/message.** Reaching out via [LinkedIn](#) can be remarkably effective.
- **Contact the Career Center.** The Fresno Pacific University Network is a group of FPU alumni who have agreed to be available to FPU students like you who are looking for job shadowing experiences.

BEFORE JOB SHADOWING

Writing your request:

- **Be clear, concise**, and let them know you are **asking for their help**. Make it easy for them to say yes: “I would love to talk to you about the opportunity to shadow you at your workplace. I am exploring career options and your role as _____ is a career I would like to learn more about.”
- **Provide a hook.** Demonstrate why you want to meet. If you admire their career path and would like to know more about their work duties, let them know. “I admire your role and would like to observe how you put your knowledge and skills into practice.”
- **Be extremely considerate** about their time and the non-confidential tasks/duties you can shadow them in. Provide info about the duties/tasks you would like to observe and the length of time. Remember your purpose but also be open to other learning opportunities.
- **Do not make it seem like you are looking for a job.** Make it clear you just want to gain comprehensive knowledge about their job and career field.

Job Shadowing Guide

Preparing for the job shadowing experience:

- **Coordinate a schedule** with the professional for the best time to shadow. Remember that some professions are year-round while others are seasonal or only during the academic year.
- **Prepare questions** to enhance your job shadowing learning experience. Ask questions related to their education, skills, and application.
- **Prepare your elevator pitch**. Be prepared to talk about yourself and your career goals.
- **Prepare your work attire**. Research the company's dress code; when in doubt ask for guidance.

DURING JOB SHADOWING

- **Break the ice.** People enjoy talking about themselves, so initiate with a conversation:
 - How did you get your start in this field?
 - What is it like working at your company?
 - What projects are you currently working on?
 - What is your opinion on [insert a recent development in the industry]?
- **Keep committed** to the coordinated schedule to complete the job shadowing. Shadowing is short term, and one day may not give you enough time to learn about the job's intricacies.
- **Make a positive impression.** Prepare to talk about yourself and long-term career goals (elevator pitch). If asked to complete tasks, ask for guidance, and showcase your skills/competencies.
- **Prepare to take notes** on your observations. At the end of the day reflect on what you learned. Continue preparing questions throughout your shadowing experience.

AFTER JOB SHADOWING

- **Follow-up** and stay connected with the professionals you are shadowing. You have spent valuable time with them, and the ongoing connection can be beneficial to your future internship/job search.
- **Send a thank you note** (mail or email) to thank them for taking time to show you their work environment and how they fulfill their job duties. Avoid standard statements of "I learned a lot." Instead, start with gratitude then recall specific bits of the job and conversation:

Hi [insert name],

Thank you for allowing me to shadow you at your workplace and showing me your day-to-day duties. I enjoyed talking with you about your experience in [career field] and learned about the intricacies of your role through observation. I appreciate all the insights you provided and the importance of following through with job tasks.

Your comments were informative, helpful, and served to enlighten my interest in [career field]. Your insights on [discussion topics during interactions] were particularly intriguing.

Your career advice has been so helpful throughout these 4 weeks. Your expertise in completing tasks has helped me in the career decision-making process. I would love to continue speaking with you as I pursue a career in [field].

Best regards,
[Your Name]