

Job Shadowing

Why should I job shadow?

Your major is the area you will study while you are at college, but what you choose to do with that major once you graduate is up to you. Job shadowing allows you to connect your classroom experience to career paths, industries, and companies. The length of a job shadow is between you and the person you are shadowing, but most will last a few hours or a day. Some students are able to job shadow one career path for a few days. Job shadows are not for academic credit and are unpaid they are unpaid. Job shadowing will help you gain knowledge in:

- Workplace culture
- Structure of a typical workday
- Skills needed in the career path or industry



Who do I job shadow?

- 1) **Start with who you know.** Think about your connections through your parents, teachers, community members, neighbors, roommate, relatives etc. Do you know someone who is in a career that looks interesting to you, or do you know someone who can connect you to someone in a career that you are interested in exploring?
- 2) **Meet with a UNI Career Services Advisor.** Career Services has a large and varied network of contacts within the state of Iowa and nationally. If you know the career path or industry you are interested in exploring, a Career Services Advisor can help you connect with someone in that area or a closely related area. They can help identify who you can meet with and how to contact them.

[Check out our resource: *Where Can I Job Shadow?*](#)

How do I set up a job shadow?

Calling: Making a professional phone call to the person is a great way to set up a job shadow.

Check out our resource: [Calling for a Job Shadow](#)

Sending an email: Emails are also an acceptable way to request a job shadow. However, emails can go unanswered and even ignored. If you've emailed the contact and haven't received a response within 3-4 days of sending the email, you should try calling.

Check out our resource: [Emailing for a Job Shadow](#)



How do I prepare?

Know the details—at least 48 hours before your shadow day, find out the logistics of your arrival and the day (if they haven't already been provided to you).

- Location / directions to the office , do you need to check in?
- Parking Information
- Schedule for the day
- Anything you may need to bring (ID, money for lunch etc.)

Research—visit the company's website to have some background on the place you are shadowing at. If the person you are shadowing has a LinkedIn page, check it out.

Questions—have questions prepared ahead of time. Questions should mainly be open-ended (can't be answered with a "yes" or "no"). You should also have a plan for how you will take notes. Consider a notebook and pen or pencil. A laptop may be a good option, but it might also be a distraction and more weight for you to carry. *Check out our resource: [Potential Questions to Ask During Your Job Shadow Experience](#)*

What to wear—you should dress professionally. The company may have its own rules about dress, but you should be fine with business casual.

On the day of the shadow?

Your first impression—even if you don't work for this company in the future, make the best impression you can. Job shadows can lead to internships and great networking opportunities, so take this opportunity seriously.

Put your phone away—silence your phone and don't look at it while on the job shadow. It's RUDE!

Give the gratitude—get used to saying thank you to everyone who gives you time during your job shadow. Remember, they are giving up their time to meet with you.

What do I do after the shadow?

Send a thank you—If you can send a handwritten thank you to the person you shadowed, DO IT! At the very least, send an email...but really, mail the handwritten thank you.

Reflect—complete the Job Shadow Reflection worksheet. This will help you start your reflection, and you can continue reflecting on a separate piece of paper (if you want).

Set up your next advising appointment—Your advisor wants to hear how the job shadow went, and help you process the experience and next steps. Set up the appointment soon after your shadow is complete.