

2014-15

# Job Shadow Handbook



Connect @ Iowa Lakes

Iowa Lakes Community College

(712) 362-0441

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# **JOB SHADOW 101**

## **The Basics**

Job shadowing is an experience that can be beneficial to both high school students and business professionals. Students who have access to the opportunities to job shadow their career choice will be able to make profound decisions about their future. The connection between students and business is important in that someday these students are potential employees of your organization. Businesses are exposed to the prospective workforce and can play a role in shaping their career development. Job shadowing is a stepping stone for students to find out if a career is right for them before going to college or the real world of work. Job shadowing is a great way to expose students to various career with experienced professionals that can provide career advice and guidance.

## **What is a Job Shadow?**

A job shadow is when a student is exposed to a career by meeting with a business professional for a short period of time (typically 2-6 hours) to observe the routine of daily tasks and activities required in that particular job. It is an opportunity for business professionals to share their knowledge and expertise of a particular occupation with a student who displays an interest in that career field. Job shadows give students the chance to ask specific questions about a particular line of work and how they can further their career path in that direction.

## **What is the purpose of Job Shadowing?**

The purpose of doing a job shadow is to explore a career to see if it's a right fit for you. Job shadowing is a valuable experience where the student can visit a workplace and see first-hand the duties a particular job consists of before investing time and money into education. The job shadow's purpose is to provide students with realistic expectations of a career and the academic journey that is involved to obtain a career in that field. Job shadowing helps the student identify the daily routines of professionals, gain awareness of the various skills that are required in the work force, determine their genuine interest in a career field, familiarize themselves with the working environment of a particular occupation, and understand the connection between work and school.

## **BENEFITS**

***There are many benefits of a job shadow that high school students can gain from their experience. Job shadows give students the chance to network with professionals in their community and learn the skills that are desired for that particular career. Job shadows create realistic expectations of a career. High school students are able to participate in several job shadow experiences if they choose to do so. The following benefits are reasons why students should consider job shadow experiences:***

- Explore a career in depth
- Find out if a career is a good fit for you before you spend time and money on a specific major
- Be recognized for being a leader in your career development
- Identify different career interest that you didn't know you had
- Explore if your interests, skills, and goals match a particular career
- Receive career path assistance from real professionals in your desired area
- Understand the connection between work and school- such as what classes to take and how it will help achieve your career goals
- Help create realistic expectations of a job and the required education needed
- Learn how to conduct yourself in a professional work environment
- Increase awareness of an assortment of skills needed for a particular job
- Observe daily routines of professionals
- Learn real work application and situations
- Hands on learning to prepare for your future
- Gain insight into the workforce
- Learn what the future outlook of a job will be
- Help build your resume for future jobs
- Become comfortable talking and working with business professionals

## PARENT INFORMATION

Dear Parent/Guardian:

By encouraging your high school student to participate in a job shadow experience, they will have the opportunity to talk with local professionals who can provide guidance in their specific career interest. Your student will be observing and discussing with these professionals to gain valuable insight and in depth information about a job. These professionals will be able to help your student gain a better understanding of the schooling/training requirements, the required skills, job conditions, and the long range demand of that career.

Students are not always aware of the numerous career options that are available within our local communities and this is a great opportunity for them to explore a career in depth. Your student will spend the day with their choice of business/careers and be able to understand the connection between careers and academics. This valuable experience will give them insight to their decisions and goals for life after high school. Job shadowing can help encourage or reject their choice of a career or major.

If you will elect to have your student participate, please fill out the permission slip and return to me as soon as possible. Please review your student's choices for job shadows with them. Once your student is placed in a job shadow, both of you will be notified. Prior to the job shadow, it would be best if you review the tips and guidelines in this booklet.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (712) 362-0441 or e-mail me at [mbates@iowalakes.edu](mailto:mbates@iowalakes.edu).

Sincerely,

Molly Bates  
Intermediary Connections Coordinator  
Iowa Lakes Community College

# **JOB SHADOW CHECKLIST AND GUIDELINES**

## **STEP ONE: BEFORE YOU APPLY FOR A JOB SHADOW**

- Identify three possible career choices or places that you would like to job shadow
- Review your three choices with your parents
- Fill out the job shadow form and return to Miss Bates
- Receive confirmation of job shadow

## **STEP TWO: PREPARING FOR YOUR JOB SHADOW**

- Arrange transportation for the day of your job shadow if needed
- Plan to arrive 15 minutes early so you know the route to your job shadow
- Prepare questions that you might have for your host
- Research your company so that you have an understanding of who they are and what they do for the community

## **STEP THREE: AFTER YOUR JOB SHADOW**

- Complete the evaluation and return to Miss Bates
- Write a thank you letter to your host- see the sample letter in this booklet for help
- If this job shadow was required for a class, remember to complete any required information given to you by your teacher

## TIPS ON HOW TO DRESS TO IMPRESS

*“You cannot climb the ladder of success dressed in the costume of failures”*

*- Zig Ziglar*

Dressing to impress your host will help make a great first impression. By dressing to impress it shows that you are taking your job shadow seriously- like you would a job interview. Dressing appropriately is a reflection of respect to your host and will be something that your host will be paying attention to. These tips are a guideline on how to dress and will help with future job interviews as well.

- Make sure you are well groomed
- Keep your breath fresh but avoid chewing gum
- Nothing too baggy, too revealing, or too offensive
- When in doubt, dress on the conservative side
- Wear clothes that are comfortable so you are not fidgeting with them
- Keep it simple
- All shirts should cover the waistline and not expose a bare midriff
- Avoid strong colognes or perfumes
- Avoid distracting accessories
- Avoid open toe shoes
- Avoid any faded, tattered, or dirty clothing
- Be sure to wear a smile 😊

# INSTRUCTION FOR THE DAY

- Arrive early
  - Being early is essential for any job that you will have in your future
  - Arriving early also helps create a great first impression
- Dress appropriately
  - Dress your best- see the tips on how to dress to impress on the previous page
  - Remember that many people that go to an interview who do not dress appropriate are not called back for a second interview or hired
- Introduce yourself with a smile and a firm handshake!
- Listen and observe
  - Your host will be able to provide you guidance and information about your career choice
  - Observe what your host does on a daily basis to see if it would be something you would like to be doing in the future
- Ask question
  - This is the perfect time to ask specific and appropriate questions that you always wonder about this career
  - Do not ask questions about pay or benefits
- Remember your manners
  - Say “Please” and “Thank You”
  - No gum
- At the end of your day, remember to say thank you to your host and shake their hand again!



# IOWA LAKES

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## COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Use these as conversation starters to learn more about your potential career!

Please think of any other questions that you may like to ask.

Remember to be polite and not ask personal questions!

### EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

(You can bring this with on your job shadow)

- ❖ How did you learn about this job?
- ❖ Why did you choose this career?
- ❖ On average, how many hours do you work a week?
- ❖ What is the primary product or service provided by this business?
- ❖ What is a typical day like for you?
- ❖ What do you like the best/least about your job?
- ❖ What is the interview process like for this particular job?
- ❖ What education or specialized training is required?
- ❖ What skills are important to be successful in your career area?
- ❖ What classes did you take in high school that helps prepare you for this job?
- ❖ Is there any type of continuing education requirements for this career?
- ❖ What types of technology or math do you use in this particular career?
- ❖ What do you or your supervisor look for when doing an evaluation?
- ❖ What does the future look like for this type of job?
- ❖ Do you travel often for your job?
- ❖ What is your best advice for students planning for their futures in your career area?

## **AFTER THE JOB SHADOW**

After you finish your job shadow, you **MUST** complete the evaluation and return to Miss Bates. You **ALSO** have to send a thank you letter to your job shadow host. If this was required for a class, please make sure to complete any of the requirements that were assigned by your teacher. If you have any questions or concerns about the evaluation or thank you letter, please let me know.

## **EVALUATION**

We are interested in collecting constructive feedback to help improve future job shadowing experiences for hosts and students. We are interested in the long-term success of these job opportunities for students and would appreciate you filling out the form on the following page to provide information on your experience. All information will be kept confidential. Please return the evaluation to Miss Bates as soon as possible.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF SENDING A THANK YOU LETTER**

Sending a thank you letter is an important skill to learn through your job shadow experience. This skill will help prepare you for writing a thank you after a job interview. Job shadow hosts like to receive a thank you and it reinforces the idea on why it is so important for other students to do job shadows. By sending a thank you, it will show your host your appreciation and gratitude for the meaningful experience they gave you. It will speak high volumes of gratefulness to your host and will help you stand out by creating a lasting and positive impression.

## **TIPS TO WRITING A THANK YOU**

- Send your thank you within 24 hours of your job shadow
- Address your thank you to the person you directly worked with
- Be genuine
- Personalize your thank you such as writing about a memorable conversation or experience you had with them
- Proofread your thank you
- It should be no longer than 1 page
- Handwritten thank you are more personalized
- Keep in mind if your handwriting is not neat, you should probably type it and sign your name
- See the example on the following page

# SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

Dear Mr. /Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_:

*1<sup>st</sup> paragraph- Thank the host for taking the time out of their day.*

Thank you for taking the time out of your day to give me the opportunity to job shadow with you. Our day gave me a better understanding of ABC Company and the requirements of the job. The information I received was helpful in gaining a better perspective of this career. It was very useful to help me make decisions for my future.

*2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph- Talk about what you liked best during your job shadow and how it will help you in the future.*

I really enjoyed learning about your job and what a typical day is like for you. I did not know that \_\_\_\_\_. I appreciate the advice you gave me on \_\_\_\_\_ that will help me achieve my dream to become a \_\_\_\_\_.

**--OR--**

I really liked when you took me on a tour of the facility and introduced me to the different people you worked with. It was really nice to see how you function as a team. I appreciate your staff for being so welcoming and answering any of my questions that I had in order to help me become a \_\_\_\_\_.

*3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph- Restate your appreciation for their time.*

Thank you again for taking the time out of your busy schedule to allow me to have such a valuable experience.

Sincerely,

*“Sign your name here”*

Joe Smith  
ABC High School



## Job Shadow Student Evaluation

We are interested in collecting constructive feedback to help improve future job shadowing experiences for host and students. We are interested in the long-term success of these job opportunities for students and would appreciate you filling this out to provide information on your experience. All information will be kept confidential.

### Student Information

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Grade:</b>	
<b>School Name:</b>		<b>Date of Job Shadow:</b>	
<b>Job Shadow Host Name:</b>		<b>Business Site:</b>	

### Ratings

	1 = Strongly Disagree	2=Disagree	3 = Neutral	4=Agree	5=Strongly Agree
<b>Easy to interact with job shadow host</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>My host was able to answer my questions.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>This experience impacted my choice of high school classes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>This job shadow impacted my choice of a college major.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>My job shadow experience provided valuable information regarding my career</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>I enjoyed this experience.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Additional comments</b>					

### Evaluation

*What did you enjoy most about your job shadow?*

*Summarize the value of your job shadow or what you learn about this career path.*

*Would you be interested in another job shadow or recommend it to a friend? If another job shadow, please provide what career pathway you be interested in.*

*What suggestions do you recommend?*

**If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Molly Bates at (712) 362-0441 or [mbates@iowalakes.edu](mailto:mbates@iowalakes.edu). You may also e-mail or fax this evaluation to 712-362-0480**

# CAREER EXPLORATION RESOURCES

## Assessment

<https://secure.ihaveaplaniowa.gov>

I Have A Plan Iowa

[www.acinet.org](http://www.acinet.org)

America's Career InfoNet

[www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)

Career Builder free online  
assessment testing

[www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)

Career One Stop

[www.careerpipeline.org](http://www.careerpipeline.org)

Career Pipeline

[www.myskillsmyfuture.org](http://www.myskillsmyfuture.org)

Career Toolbox

## Career Exploration

[www.bls.gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco)

Occupational Outlook Handbook

[www.careers.iptv.org](http://www.careers.iptv.org)

IPTV School to Careers

[www.jobshadow.com](http://www.jobshadow.com)

Job Shadows

[www.jobstar.org/tools/career/spec-car.cfm](http://www.jobstar.org/tools/career/spec-car.cfm)

Job Star Central

[www.mynextmove.org](http://www.mynextmove.org)

My Next Move

[www.nextstepu.com](http://www.nextstepu.com)

Next Step

<http://healthjobs.njha.com>

Career in Healthcare

[www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org)

O\*Net

[www.studenttransitions.com](http://www.studenttransitions.com)

Student Transitions

## Career Planning

[www.collegeplanning.org](http://www.collegeplanning.org)

College Planning

[www.thinkcollege.net](http://www.thinkcollege.net)

Think College

[www.review.com](http://www.review.com)

The Princeton Review

## Financial Aid

[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

Free Financial Aid Online  
Worksheet

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any questions about job shadows or other career exploration activities please contact Molly Bates.

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