



Job Shadowing

AUBURN UNIVERSITY CAREER CENTER
YOUR CAREER. OUR MISSION.

303 MARTIN HALL | 334.844.4744 | AUBURN.EDU/CAREER

WHAT EXACTLY IS JOB SHADOWING?

Job Shadowing is an opportunity to “shadow” or follow an employer, gaining information about careers in which you are interested, allowing you to make informed decisions about career choices.

- You follow a sponsor at their office to gather information about their job, career field and the kind of preparation you need to enter their profession
- Sponsors (employer participants) are people who are Auburn alumni, parents or friends who volunteer their time to help Auburn students
- You are matched with a sponsor whose occupation most closely matches your career interests
- You receive the name of your sponsor after the Participant Form is completed

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF JOB SHADOWING?

- To gain insight into careers of interest and make informed decisions about career choices
- Not to seek employment
- Not to receive pay or academic credit
- To perhaps include on resume to show serious interest in career field

WHAT MIGHT I DO WHILE JOB SHADOWING?

- Observe work being performed
- Attend staff or committee meetings or presentations
- Tour the organization
- Conduct an informational interview with a professional in the field
- Attend a training program for new employees
- Assist with completion of a sample work assignment
- Visit a client or a site

WHO MAY PARTICIPATE IN JOB SHADOWING?

- All Auburn students and alumni are eligible
- You may participate as many times as you like in the program as long as you fulfill the Job Shadowing requirements

HOW DO I START JOB SHADOWING?

- Attend a Job Shadowing workshop or speak with the Job Shadowing coordinator in the Auburn University Career Center in 303 Martin Hall or call 844.4744
- Some opportunities take five to six weeks to set-up.

CHECKLIST

- Determine your “Goals for Shadowing” to help focus your reasons for shadowing and allow for a good fit.
- Complete **Job Shadowing Application Form***. Copy will be sent to your sponsor.
- Research sponsor’s field and company/organization in the Career Center resource library and on-line services.
- Create **resume** and have reviewed.
- Self-assess and be prepared to discuss your academic background, activities, skills and experiences. This helps Sponsor advise you about suitability to his/her field and to direct you to appropriate niches within the field.
- Schedule shadowing. (The Career Center locates your Sponsor, but you set-up your visit. The Sponsor will have your information sheet by the time you call.)
- Notify the Career Center coordinator of the date(s) of your shadowing visit. If after speaking to your sponsor, you decide you do not wish to shadow with him/her, let the Career Center know so they may find you another sponsor.
- Prepare and ask meaningful questions.
- Dress appropriately for the industry you are Shadowing. In general, suits are appropriate for both men and women. Avoid excessive make-up and jewelry.
- Arrive 10-15 minutes prior to meeting time.
- Meet with Sponsor. *If you have an emergency that keeps you from making your appointment, notify Sponsor and the Career Center immediately. This person has made special accommodations for you. Do not jeopardize future opportunities for other students due to irresponsibility.*
- Greet sponsor with warm, firm handshake, make eye contact and stand erect.
- Prepare to take notes, but focus more on building rapport than writing.
- Verbally thank Sponsor when leaving.
- Send Sponsor thank you note immediately after your visit. Handwritten is sufficient if you have neat handwriting.
- Complete **Job Shadowing Evaluation Form**.
- Forms available at www.auburn.edu/career

CONTACTING YOUR SPONSOR

Once you have been assigned a Shadowing Sponsor, it is **your responsibility** to contact the sponsor, by phone or email, to schedule a date to meet. Do not give up if you miss the Sponsor on the first few tries. He or she may be on vacation or a business trip.

When you call your Sponsor, be prepared to introduce yourself to someone delegated to screen calls: *“Hello, my name is Jane Doe, and I am a student at Auburn University. Mr. Employer has been assigned as my Sponsor through the Job Shadowing Program through the Auburn University Career Center. I am calling to speak with him about my Shadowing experience and set-up a time for my visit.”*

When you reach your sponsor, introduce yourself and explain the purpose of your call: *“Hello, thank you for taking my call. My name is Jane Doe, and I am enrolled in the Job Shadowing Program through the Auburn University Career Center. I am interested in exploring the field of marketing, and you have been assigned as my Sponsor. If you are busy right now, is there a more convenient time for me to call?”*

POINTS TO COVER WITH YOUR SPONSOR.

- Discuss the purpose for shadowing
- Briefly share your academic background, major and minor
- Arrange mutually agreeable date and time
- Give the Sponsor your phone number and email (he/she may need to contact you)
- Obtain directions to the organization
- Ask for parking instructions
- Ask whether you should bring a lunch (if you like and if Shadowing during lunchtime)
- Ask the Sponsor about appropriate attire

At end of conversation, confirm Shadowing appointment details and thank Sponsor.

EMAILING YOUR SPONSOR

If you opt to email your sponsor, write as you would a proper business letter. Check spelling and grammar. If spelling and grammar are not your forte, have a friend or someone in the Career Center edit it for you.

Introduce yourself and remind sponsor of the pending Shadowing experience arranged through the Career Center. Include your available dates for Shadowing. Request directions and instructions for parking. Ask if you should bring your lunch and inquire about appropriate dress.

NOTIFY THE CAREER CENTER WHEN THE FOLLOWING OCCURS

- You have made contact with your sponsor.
- If you decide NOT to participate in the Shadowing program.
- If the employer determines that you are not well matched for Shadowing him/her.

TAKE TO YOUR JOB SHADOWING EXPERIENCE

- Pen and notebook
- List of questions to ask your Sponsor
- Job Shadowing Goals
- Occupational Research Worksheet
- Resume
- Reading material in case Sponsor needs time to take care of confidential business
- Money to cover parking, soda/snacks, lunch and any additional expenses

Tips for a Successful Job Shadowing Day

- Be timely. It isn't just nice, it's mandatory.
- Learn what education and experience is needed, ways to enter and what it may be like to work in your Sponsor's field.
- Be prepared to generally sit and observe.
- If asked to work on a project, feel free to ask basic instructions and gain clarification of Sponsor's expectations.
- Keep in mind that anything you hear or see may be confidential and keep it that way.
- Ask to meet with your Sponsor's colleagues and others within the company who may be at different stages in their career.
- Observe people you meet. Do they seem to like their jobs? Do they seem to be happy? Observe the overall work environment.
- If Sponsor offers to take you out to lunch, that is fine, but do not expect it and be prepared to feed yourself.
- Act responsibly to favorably represent yourself and the University.
- If your Sponsor is an Auburn alumnus, talk about campus life and student concerns today, if you think this is of interest.
- If problems occur while Shadowing, contact the Career Center.
- If you do not feel comfortable with a request made by a Sponsor or one of his/her colleagues, you do not need to comply.
- Be yourself, relax and enjoy the experience, though it is common to feel slightly anxious.
- Complete your Student Evaluation Form. We welcome your feedback so we may continue to improve the program.

NETWORKING AND INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AFTER JOB SHADOWING...

- How did you get started in this business? What is your educational background and what previous work experience have you had?
- What short- and long-term trends affect your industry?
- What are the positive and negative aspects of your position and this industry as a whole?
- What are the major rewards of your job?
- What are the major frustrations you encounter on your job? How do you deal with them?
- What fringe benefits are offered on your job? What is a possible salary range for someone in your occupation?
- Who are the recognized leaders in this industry?
- What professional associations represent this industry?
- Is there another professional I should talk with about careers/trends in this field?
- What are some other good sources of information about this industry - articles, reports, journals, people?
- What are current career options in this field?
- In this field of work, how is employment achieved, through direct application by the potential employee or through the network of current employees?
- What skills, experience or other qualifications are sought by employers in this field for entry-level employees?
- What is the typical career path for entry-level hires?
- Of your organization's hires the last three years, what qualities, backgrounds or achievements did they have that made them attractive candidates for your positions?
- Is training with your firm formal or on-the-job training?
- (Offer a copy of your resume.) Could I get your opinion on my resume? What strengths and/or weaknesses do you see in my qualifications?
- Can I call you if I have further questions or to check with you about news and leads in the field?

"Networking." National Business Employment Weekly: 1994

- Think about courses you might take to prepare for entry into the field.
- Try to find career-related work, part-time or summer job, internship or co-op.
- Arrange an additional Shadowing experience or set-up an informational interview.
- Go to www.auburn.edu/career to learn of part-time, full-time and summer job opportunities as well as internships.

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

You may handwrite your letter if you have nice handwriting. This is just a sample. You will want to personalize your message, perhaps mentioning a particular moment in the day(s).

March 3, 20xx

Mr. Awesome Employer
President, Dream Company
123 College Street
Auburn, AL 36830

Dear Mr. Employer:

Thank you for the opportunity to observe you at work. I now have a much clearer understanding of your field and whether I wish to pursue employment in it.

I appreciate your willingness to share your knowledge and time with me.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

Jane Doe