The Calvin University Job Shadowing Program provides you with a unique opportunity for career exploration. Job shadow opportunities are short-term, unpaid opportunities to meet with a professional and gain a first-hand perspective of someone’s day-to-day work life.

Through an application process, you are matched with employers, alumni, and other partners of the university based on career interest to explore a particular profession and work environment. While not 100% guaranteed, we aim to match you with a host in your field.

**WHAT IS JOB SHADOWING?**

Job shadowing is an opportunity for you to connect with, or “shadow,” a professional who has specific knowledge about a career in which you are interested. While you shadow, you will observe the responsibilities and tasks associated with your host’s career and have the opportunity to ask questions about the knowledge, skills, talents, and level of education required for the job. While the purpose of job shadowing is to let you gather career-related information, it also allows you to build your network, become aware of trends in the field, and see workforce technologies in action.

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

- What do I hope to learn through job shadowing?
- What jobs should I consider shadowing? (If you have not already, take PathwayU for possible career matches).
- What specific aspects of the industry, company, or position do I want to learn about (i.e. day-to-day activities, required skills, advancement opportunities, etc.)?

**BENEFITS OF JOB SHADOWING**

- Job shadowing is an ideal way to learn firsthand about the day-to-day work of a professional in a career of interest to you.
- A job shadow offers you the chance to “try out” a field or observe a company’s culture without long-term commitment.
- What you observe during a job shadow can clarify your career interests or goals, even if you learn that your dream job is not exactly what you thought!
- Job shadowing may help you connect your coursework to career opportunities and future plans.
- Job shadows also provide opportunities for you to build professional relationships with people in your desired career field. By having in-depth conversations with a professional and meeting his or her colleagues, you are expanding your professional network significantly. You may even find a professional mentor.
HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE JOB SHADOWING PROGRAM

1. Complete the online program application.
2. Your Career Coach will review your application and identify potential job shadow hosts that align with your interests. Expect to get an email from your Career Coach requesting an appointment with you.
3. Meet with your Career Coach to discuss potential host(s), how to prepare, and what to expect for the job shadow experience.
4. Contact your job shadow host to schedule the shadowing experience.
5. Shadow (in-person or virtually) your host at the agreed-upon date and time.
6. Send a thank you note to your host and complete follow-up survey from the Career Center.

SAMPLE JOB SHADOW REQUEST EMAIL

Dear (Host Name),

I have been paired with you for the Calvin University Job Shadowing Program. I am excited to learn more about your role as (title) at (employer name).

I am currently a sophomore at Calvin University studying (major), and I am in the process of exploring various career paths within the (major/industry) field. I would appreciate having the opportunity to ask questions, observe you and your colleagues at work, and learn from your experience.

Please feel free to suggest some possible days and times that could work best for a shadowing experience within the next month. I am hoping to shadow for at least a half day, but I am open to whatever timeframe is most convenient for you.

Thank you for your willingness to allow me to shadow you! I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,

(name)

POTENTIAL JOB SHADOW ACTIVITIES

An exact schedule of activities will be determined between you and your job shadow host, but may include:

- Touring the facilities
- Assisting with small projects or office tasks
- Conducting informational interviews with staff members; meeting with key players
- Exploring potential career paths within the organization and profession
- Reviewing current trends in the profession

Sample Half-Day Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 am-9:30 am</td>
<td>Welcome, introductions, company overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 am-10:00 am</td>
<td>Office tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 am-10:30 am</td>
<td>Q&amp;A, insight into daily role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 am-11:30 am</td>
<td>Shadow the host</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 am-12:00 pm</td>
<td>Employee panel discussion, meet &amp; greet, or informational interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch with alumni, current interns, supervisors, and/or recent hires OR student departs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREPARING FOR YOUR JOB SHADOW EXPERIENCE

BEFORE YOUR JOB SHADOW

- Research the person you will be shadowing, as well as the company or organization.

- Be familiar with your job shadow host’s background, and spend time on the company’s website and LinkedIn page. Any insight you gain into the company or field will give you helpful context for conversations during the job shadow experience!

- Prepare a list of questions you can ask the professionals with whom you interact during your job shadow. Reference the Informational Interview resource here.

- Be ready to talk about yourself. The people you meet will have questions for you, so be prepared to introduce yourself, talk about your career interests, and explain why this job shadow is beneficial.

- Confirm the date and time of your job shadow with your host a few days prior.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR JOB SHADOW

- Arrive 10-15 minutes early. Keep your cell phone muted. Dress professionally and in accordance with the dress code shared by your host.

- Bring a notepad and pen so you can jot down names, notes and questions.

- Bring copies of your resume, but only offer a copy if someone requests one.

- Be prepared to sign non-disclosure agreement forms requested by the company, and then keep the details of what you hear and learn confidential. Actively engage by giving your full attention, smiling, introducing yourself, offering firm handshakes, making eye contact, and asking thoughtful questions.

- Collect the business cards of any new contacts so that you can follow up with them after the job shadow by sending thank you notes and connecting on LinkedIn.

AFTER YOUR JOB SHADOW EXPERIENCE

- Send a handwritten thank you within 24 hours. If a handwritten note is not possible, a thank you email will suffice. Send this note to the professional who hosted you. Reference a highlight or your biggest takeaway. Graciously express your appreciation for the investment this job shadow required.

- Request to connect with new contacts on LinkedIn. Send them a personalized invitation on LinkedIn, and connect with them regularly to nurture the relationship.

- Add this job shadow experience to your resume. Find the most appropriate place to include it, and be prepared to share a story or two about what you learned from this job shadow in an interview.

- Reflect on what you learned and consider talking through your answers with your Career Coach:
  1. What did I learn about this company and field?
  2. What was the highlight of the experience?
  3. Could I enjoy this type of position? Does it align with my personality, strengths, values, and interests?
  4. What surprised or disappointed me the most?
  5. Am I still interested in pursuing this line of work?
  6. What concerns do I have about this career?
  7. What skills or additional education do I need to pursue in order to succeed in this role?
  8. What are the next steps for my professional future?
Calvin University will not take responsibility for any incidents occurring during the job shadowing experience. Student and host should review all necessary safety rules and regulations. Job shadow hosts should provide necessary safety briefings and equipment to the student prior to the beginning of the job shadowing experience.

It is the student’s responsibility to disclose any medical conditions that might result in safety concerns prior to the visit. If travel is required for the job shadow experience, students are 100% responsible for their own transportation, travel arrangements, lodging and any expenses.

Required waivers, permission forms, Release of Liability, non-disclosure, confidentiality forms should be provided by the employer and read and signed by the student if required by the company or organization.