

## Job Shadowing Professionals

Job shadowing is the experience of following a profession through his/her day. It may include observing client meetings, participating in projects, touring facilities, and conducting informational interviews. Job shadowing varies in length from a few hours to an entire work week. The key to shadowing is learning about, growing in, and understanding your field of interest. It differs from an internship in that it is short-term, offers no payment, and helps you gain an insider's view of the profession.

**Connect:** Research and contact different professionals in your field you want to shadow.

- Be courteous and show some excitement towards learning about this profession.
- Find potential opportunities to shadow by:
  - Searching Career Central for potential companies of interest.
  - Speak with faculty in your major/area of study.
  - Speak with family or friends about potential connections.
- Contact companies
  - Send an email, call, or send a written letter\*
  - Note: Small companies will probably be easier to make and maintain contact due to their size. Larger companies may be busier and require multiple follow up contacts. Don't give up!
  - Confirm dates, times, length of shadowing if possible, and any other details before your first day arrival (check-in procedures, documentation needed, dress code, etc.)

\*Sample Email

Dear **Mr.** \_\_\_\_\_,

I am a **(year in school, i.e. freshman)** studying **(major)** at Central Michigan University. I have learned a lot from my academic experience so far and would now like to learn about **(profession)** from the perspective of a professional.

I am seeking a shadowing opportunity at your company and hope you might allow me to observe your company interactions for a few hours on a day and time that works best for you. (You can include the hours you are free here. But make sure it is weeks in advance).

Please let me know if you can accept a student shadow at this time.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_, class of 20\_\_\_\_

**Shadow:** What to do and what not to do.

- **Do:**
  - Arrive 10-15 minutes early.
  - Address everyone formally unless told otherwise.
  - Bring a small notepad or notebook to take notes.
  - Be ready to talk about yourself.
  - Collect business cards given.
  - ASK QUESTIONS.
  - Follow the workplace's rules.
  - Maintain a good attitude.
  - Remember you're a guest. Act as such. Don't interrupt a conversation or meeting.
  - Dress business casual, unless directed otherwise.
    - Women: Slacks, blouse or button shirt, blazer, dress shoes (not heels).
    - Men: Slacks, button shirt, blazer, dress shoes
- **Don't:**
  - Enter the position without research.
  - Use your phone while shadowing.
  - Assume you already know everything.
  - Leave without asking about other opportunities.
  - Forget to connect with new contacts on LinkedIn.
  - Forget to send a thank you note.
  - Forget to add this job shadow experience to your resume.

**Potential questions to ask:**

- What does a typical day look like for you?
- How did you get started in this profession?
- What personal qualities or skills are important to be successful in this profession?
- What do you like best and least about your job?
- If you had to do it over, would you consider the same career?
- How do you balance your family/personal life with this career?
- How has the industry changed since you began working in it?
- What are some trends you see in this profession?
- How do you continue to grow your education or skills?
- Which professional journals or organizations would help me learn more?

**Reflect:** The key to determining if this is the best career path for you.

- What day-to-day activities come with this role?
- What did I learn about this company and profession?
- What was the highlight of the experience?
- Could I enjoy this type of position?
- What surprised or disappointed me the most?
- What did you like and dislike about the job you were shadowing:  
1 (Hated it!) – 5 (no opinion or don't know) – 10 (absolutely loved it!) = Circle one
  - Work schedule                    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
  - Stress level                        1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
  - Responsibilities                    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
  - Professionalism                   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
  - Environment                      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
  - Variety/Routine                   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
  - Skills needed                      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
  
- What are the next steps for my professional future?

# Internships

Internships provide hands-on learning opportunities for you to put into practice the things you learn in the classroom. These experiences help you gain real world skills, network with professionals in your field, build your resume, and better understand your potential profession.

Students at Central Michigan University (CMU) can find internships through several resources and strategies:

## 1. CMU Career Development Center (CDC)

- **Career Central:** CMU partners with 12Twenty, an online job and internship portal where students can search for opportunities.
- **Career Coaching:** Students can schedule one-on-one sessions to refine their résumés, cover letters, and interview skills.
- **Career Fairs:** CMU hosts job and internship fairs where students can network with employers.

## 2. Academic Departments & Faculty

- Many departments have connections with industry partners and may offer internship opportunities.
- Some majors require or strongly encourage internships as part of their curriculum.

## 3. Networking & Professional Associations

- Connecting with CMU alumni through **LinkedIn** or the **CMU Alumni Association** can lead to internship leads.
- Joining registered student organizations (RSO) and professional societies related to their major can help students access exclusive internships.

## 4. Employer Partnerships & Local Businesses

- Many local businesses in Mount Pleasant and surrounding areas offer internships.
- Large companies with Michigan offices (such as Dow, General Motors, or Ford) often recruit CMU students.

## 5. Government & Research Internships

- Federal programs such as **Pathways Internships** (USAJobs.gov) offer paid government internships.
- CMU's **Office of Research and Graduate Studies** may have research internship opportunities.

## 6. Online Internship Platforms

- **Indeed, LinkedIn Jobs, Internships.com, WayUp**—these websites feature nationwide and remote internship opportunities.