

WFA Sixth Form: What is 'work shadowing'?

If you are struggling to find a week's 'work experience' placement, it may be easier for an employer to consider taking you on a 'work shadowing' placement.

Work shadowing is a less formal type of work experience. You would typically have identified an occupation sector, potential companies or an organisation within that, and then a role which interests you.

In work shadowing, the aim is to observe one person to discover more about their daily experiences, activities and responsibilities. What does their role involve and how do they do that job? What skills do they need and what are the expectations placed on them?

Work shadowing is also easier for an employer because it is usually short term, perhaps a few days. It is also easier for a busy employer to organise as you do not need to be directed in activities and supervised with tasks; you are simply observing.

Just as you did with speculative letters or emails when looking for work experience, make the same sort of approach for potential work shadowing. However, think it through first by asking yourself:

What kind of career/ job/ role are you interested in?

What kind of company or organisation might have those opportunities?

What am I asking for? (To observe someone working over a couple of days, perhaps?)
If you create a good impression, this is often extended, or other opportunities found for you.

Also, because you are asking less from an employer, you can ask a wider range of people to see if they have contacts: family/ relatives/ neighbours/ your form tutor and staff at school / colleagues at work etc.

Remember, engage with Mrs Fosbrook, who is dedicating time to support Y12 students experience the world of work. Also develop your networking skills ... who might someone *you know*, know?

Be positive and be productive! Good Luck!

Mrs Mann,