



Job Shadow

Studies show that Oklahoma currently faces a large work skills gap. In 2016, approximately half (46 percent) of the Oklahoma workforce had either attained only a high school diploma or dropped out of high school altogether. However, by 2025, 77 percent of Oklahoma jobs will require some form of education beyond high school. This is why it is important more than ever to provide students with high-quality work-based experiences. (Oklahoma works)

WBL takes many forms and often includes experiences such as: internships, job shadowing, and service-learning. “High-quality work-based learning experiences pair young people with mentors who show them how to solve real-world problems, cultivate professional skills, shoulder adult responsibilities, build workplace relationships, identify interests and aptitudes, and make good decisions about careers and college.” (The Southern Regional Education Board)

WHAT IS A JOB SHADOW EXPERIENCE?

Job shadowing allows students to explore a specific career by following an employee while they perform their typical work duties in a real-world work environment. Job shadowing is a temporary and unpaid experience that provides valuable career information to participants. Students of any age can participate in a job shadow experience virtual or in person. Benefits from job shadow opportunities include:

- Flexibility to participate in or out of regular school hours via field trip, virtual, or other methods at the discretion of the school district.
- Opportunity to tour an industry while interviewing professionals.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

When creating job shadow opportunities it is important to make sure that they support a student’s Individual Career Academic Plan (ICAP). A job shadow opportunity is most successful when it is flexible and provides all students the opportunity to participate in workforce, mentorship, and leadership activities. Consider using a [planning document](#) to ensure that you create an equitable program that is able to yield successful outcomes, remain on schedule, and create equitable opportunities. Before you begin designing your program, consider using a planning resource as a strategy for engaging diverse stakeholders such as higher education and industry systems to help coordinate efforts to prepare students for future workforce opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION EXAMPLES

Workplace Job Shadow Opportunities

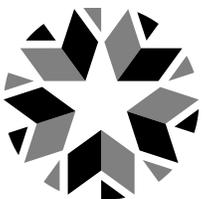
A workplace job shadow opportunity provides a student the opportunity to observe in a professional workforce setting. This experience may include: attending meetings with supervisors or teammates, learning about the company culture and industry at large, and reflecting upon their experience. When developing a job shadow experience it is important to develop policies for student safety, transportation, course design, and expected outcomes. For more guidance, view this [job shadow toolkit](#).

Virtual Job Shadow Experiences

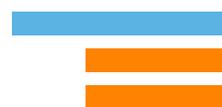
Allowing students to shadow an employee virtually helps students practice virtual professional etiquette while observing a professional in their natural space. This method is optimal for districts that are in a virtual environment or districts with limited transportation, limited access to industry, and liability concerns. Job shadow requirements are at the discretion of the district, requirements should remain the same for students participating virtually or in person. Schools interested in this model should consider virtual tools such as the [OSDE Connect tool](#) or the [Future Link](#) initiative or other virtual [job shadow tools](#).

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

- Consider sending business partnership [letters](#) and [agreements](#) to their local businesses or chambers of commerce.
- K-12 school districts can initiate or continue relationships with their local tribal nations by contacting appropriate tribal leaders. This [helpful guide](#) shows appropriate leaders to contact at each Oklahoma Tribal Educational Agency.
- Consider using a [resource](#) for students to reflect upon their work-based learning (WBL) experiences to show how WBL can help achieve their career goals. Each ICAP online tool will have a section to provide this information, encourage students to add as much detail as possible.
- Consider [increasing access](#) to effective college and career advisors or counselors.
- Examine inequities in college and career preparatory resources on the OSDE's [Postsecondary Indicator Guidance](#) resource.



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