

Work Shadowing

Work Shadowing usually starts with a welcome, introductions and an overview of the company, followed by a tour of the premises and a final question -and -answer session. It often involves following the activities of one member of staff throughout their day. It is important to brief students prior to the visit to set the context and agree tasks and observations to be completed. To maximise learning from the experience teachers should debrief students on return to school.

Pupils shadow a worker in a company for a period of time — usually up to one week. In that time they should have the opportunity to work the same hours, observe the tasks and activities that the worker is involved in and, where appropriate, engage in some discussion about the nature of the work. Shadowing may carry less physical risks because the shadower should not engage in any activities — although the ‘working environment’ is still an issue to be considered. In some instances it may be possible for a group of primary school pupils to shadow an individual for a short period of time to allow them to learn more about ‘jobs’ and the world of work as part of a topic study for example. Pupils may undertake the SQA Work Shadowing Unit.

BENEFITS FOR PUPILS

- First-hand (observational) experience of working life in a real environment
- Careers information at first-hand
- The shadow programme could contribute to a curricular project or item of research for an investigation.

ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES FOR SCHOOLS

- Travel and subsistence costs may be an issue.
- Pupils need to be prepared for the shadow.
- Personnel involved in the shadow must be briefed.

BENEFITS FOR BUSINESS

- Enhanced company image within the local community
- Opportunities for staff to further develop interpersonal and communication skills
- Access to potential recruits
- An opportunity to explain aspects of the work of the company

COMMITMENT REQUIRED FROM COMPANIES

- Loss of productivity for the staff involved in the shadowing
- The need to consider which aspects of the business, if any, should be excluded from a shadowing programme

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- The pupils or staff undertaking the shadow should be well briefed prior to the shadow period and, where appropriate, debriefed so that the impact of the experience is maximised.

CERTIFICATION POSSIBILITIES

SQA Work Shadowing Unit

YEAR GROUP TARGETED

S4,5,6

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/CCC_FirstPage.jsp