

Apprentice Shadowing Guide

An apprentice and employer guide to providing a good shadowing experience

Introduction

Work shadowing is an essential part of an apprentice's journey, not only when starting the apprenticeship, but also throughout, gaining practical experience and career exploration. Creating job shadowing opportunities helps an apprentice to develop valuable skills and also build crucial professional networks, whilst also allowing personal/professional growth, skills, knowledge, behaviour and sharing of good practice.

This guide will help you to understand techniques in identifying opportunities as part of your development.

Hints and tips to work shadowing

STEP 1



Identify desired roles and departments:

Note the specific job roles, teams, or departments where shadowing would be relevant and valuable for your development. Consider skills gaps, interests, and career aspirations to guide your selections.

STEP 2



Discuss with your Line Manager and Skills Coach:

Speak to your Line Manager and Skills Coach about your shadowing ambitions, identifying your aims, desired outcomes, and how shadowing fits with your apprenticeship standard.

STEP 3



Research and approach suitable hosts:

Utilise networking channels and internal contacts recommended by your manager to find the right people to shadow. Contact those directly with a polite request, including a short explanation of your interest, objectives and the benefits for both parties.

STEP 4



Formalise arrangements:

Once your shadowing opportunity has been agreed, confirm the logistics (dates, times and expectations) and outline the tasks/activities you plan to observe, and clarify ground rules or confidentiality concerns.

STEP 5



Prepare for the experience:

Set clear objectives for your shadowing session. Prepare sensible, well-researched questions relevant to the role, tasks and activities. Ensure to dress appropriately and arrive on time to make a positive impression.

STEP 6



Engage and takes notes:

Actively observe day-to-day tasks and interactions and note key processes, decisions and skills displayed. Use opportunities where appropriate to ask questions, whilst also respecting the host's workflow.

STEP 7



Seek feedback and reflect:

After completing your shadowing activity, ensure to thank your host for the experience and ask for feedback on your participation. Meet with your manager to reflect on what you learned and identify how it connects to your apprenticeship and further opportunities to pursue.

STEP 8



Keep in touch:

Ensure to follow up with your host via email, Microsoft Teams or other channels to express your gratitude and maintain the connection, allowing you to ask further questions and identify potential future opportunities, as and when they arise.

Workplace development and off-the-job hours (OTJH)

Make sure any shadowing activities you are arranging are reviewed with your skills coach and recorded in your workplace development plan, ensuring the duration of time spent on the shadowing activity is also logged as off the job training, where relevant.

Following the above shadowing approach will ensure a professional, structured process will maximise your learning and development in the workplace, and will also help to expand your network of stakeholders.