

HOW TO ARRANGE A MEDICAL SHADOWING EXPERIENCE

What is “shadowing?”

Shadowing is an extracurricular activity in which a pre-medical/dental student follows a medical or dental professional for a designated period of time. Shadowing a doctor is a great way to find out if a career in medicine might be right for you. It will give you invaluable clinical exposure; a better understanding of what a doctor’s typical day is like. It may give you good experience to talk about in your applications and interviews for medical school. It’s also a great way to gain familiarity with the vast number of different medical and research environments, as well as specialties. Shadowing is a requirement for medical and dental applications, varying between 50 - 100 hours depending on the program.

How can I find someone to shadow?

“It’s not only what you know, it’s who you can get to know...”

Reach out: you may not personally know a doctor to ask about shadowing opportunities, but you may know someone who does. Be bold in reaching out to family, friends professors, church members, former personal physician, and on social media to obtain potential contacts. Consider making contact cards to hand out to potential sources.

Research: spend time online researching potential local physicians, dentists, and practices with specialties that may interest you.

Cold call: don’t be intimidated to make those outreach calls. You may want to research names and numbers of practices in your area, and reach out to the physician, dentist, or human resources office. Remember to be courteous and professional.

Be active:

- Network amongst other students and find out where they completed their shadowing experience.
- Join professional associations at BYU.
- Join local Professional associations.
- Attend Career fairs at BYU.
- Search social media for pre-medical/pre-dental groups online, ie. Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.

Be persistent: if the first person you ask says “no”, don’t stop. Be bold and ask the ask secondary questions, “If I am unable to shadow with you, do you know another physician in a similar field, whom would be willing to work with me?” Move on to the next referral and keep making calls, inquiring about potential opportunities.

Expand your search: there are countless dental/medical practices and hospitals in Utah and Salt Lake County. Do not limit yourself to only opportunities close to home.

- There are 7 hospitals within 25 - 30 minutes of BYU, ie. Payson Mountain View Hospital, Timpanogas Regional Hospital, Orem Community Hospital, American Fork Hospital, Lehi Mountain Point Hospital, IHC Medical Center, UVRMC.
- There are large physician owned practices with multiple outpatient centers.
- There are numerous small single outpatient clinics.
- Consider alternate opportunities like: Utah State Psychiatric Hospital, Hospice and Home Health Companies, Assisted Living Centers, Skilled Nursing Facilities/Rehabilitation Centers, and/or the Utah County Health Department.

Get Ready: each office or facility will have different requirements for you to be approved for a shadowing experience. These requirements may take up to 3 - 4 weeks each to complete, prior to shadowing.

- obtain a copy of your childhood vaccination record and update your vaccines
- <http://www.utahcountyonline.org/Dept/Health/immunizations/index.asp#adult>
- tuberculosis testing
- prepare to get background check
- familiarize yourself with confidentiality and privacy of patient information guidelines.

Be creative with transportation: remember to think outside of the box when it comes to potential locations of shadowing experiences; don't let transportation get in the way of a great opportunity. Utah County has great access to Salt Lake County and other areas via public transportation and alternate transportation resources. Getting to Salt Lake County can get you access to more shadowing experiences and positions at medical training centers, such as the University of Utah and Intermountain Medical Center.

- Front Runner
- Trax
- UTA bus
- Rideshare/Carpool
- Uber/Lyft

How do I ask for a shadowing experience?

- Be prepared to express information about yourself, prior to expressing interest in a specific shadowing experience.
- Be able to answer the following questions:
 - Why are you interested in shadowing this specific physician?
 - Why are you interested in shadowing in this specific field?
- Make sure to mention your referral source, as listed above.

- Tell them a little bit about yourself: name, school, major study, prior research or medical experience, and personal future goals.
- Make sure to use best professional practices on the phone.
- Consider going directly to the hospital or medial office to inquire about potential opportunities.
- Be prepared to fill out a job shadowing application form.
- Prepare to contact the administration office for the hospital or outpatient office.
- Be ready to answer questions in return, ie. how long you want to shadow and what types of shadow experiences are you looking for?
- Write out and memorize your personal introduction statement. For example:

“Good morning, my name is _____. I am a Junior at BYU, majoring in _____. I am interested in exploring a career as a _____, and would like to job shadow at your office and/or hospital and/or company. Would it be possible to speak with someone who might help me arrange a job shadowing experience? I would like to come in to spend some time with someone to observe and ask questions.”

Other Resources:

<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-graduate-schools/top-medical-schools/articles/2015/02/17/find-the-right-physician-shadowing-program>

<https://due.mit.edu/news/2011/mit-prehealth-advising-organizes-successful-physician-shadow-program>

<https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/shadowing-doctor/>

<https://www.studentdoctor.net/2008/03/pre-med-preparation-the-importance-of-physician-shadowing/>

<http://students.georgiasouthern.edu/career/students/job-shadowing/>

<https://medicalschoollhq.net/preparing-for-a-career-in-medicine-clinical-experience/>

<https://www.kaptest.com/study/mcat/pre-med-tips-for-shadowing-a-physician/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/medical-school-admissions-doctor/articles/2017-05-16/5-ways-to-develop-strong-clinical-experiences-for-medical-school>

http://www.adea.org/GoDental/Application_Prep/Preparing_for_Dental_School/Shadowing.aspx#sthash.6uFae5gO.dpbs

<https://www.asdanet.org/index/get-into-dental-school/before-you-apply/predental-shadowing-guide>