The Guided Professional Shadowing (GPS) program connects undeclared UNL students with professionals working in a career area of interest. Brought to you by Career Services and the Exploratory and Pre-Professional Advising Center, GPS can help you gain insight into a specific career and to decide whether or not you can see yourself in that career. In addition, a valuable contact and mentor can be found through a successful shadowing experience.

Turn by Turn Directions

1. Visit Career Services to meet with a Counselor about your academic and career interests. At this meeting you will identify a career area or industry you want to explore further.

2. Within a week, the Career Services GPS Coordinator will contact you to schedule an appointment at which you will receive the name and contact information for a professional in that field as well as coaching in how to request the shadowing opportunity.

3. Contact the professional by phone or e-mail to schedule the meeting at least 2 weeks prior to the date you are requesting. Keep in mind that the person you will shadow is making a special effort to meet with you, so be prepared to be flexible in scheduling.

4. Shadow the professional at the scheduled time. Follow the tips on the back of this overview to make it a successful shadowing experience.

5. Schedule an appointment with the GPS Coordinator in Career Services to discuss your experience and talk about next steps.

Sample e-mail request to shadow a professional.

Subject: Request to shadow by UNL student Your Name

Message:

Dear Mr./Ms. Smith,

I am currently a student at UNL and am considering a career in banking. The Guided Professional Shadowing Coordinator at the university gave me your name as someone who might be willing to help me learn more about the profession by spending time with you on the job.

I would like to schedule a date to shadow you for a half or full day as you go about your usual schedule. If possible, a short interview with you about the banking industry and your career path would also be very helpful.

Thank you for considering my request. Please let me know possible dates that fit with your schedule. I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,
Your Name, UNL student
yourname@huskers.unl.edu
Your 10 digit phone number

Career Services
230 Nebraska Union | 402.472.3145 | www.unl.edu/careers

Exploratory and Pre-Professional Advising Center
Love South 127 | 402.472.3605 | explorecenter.unl.edu

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln is an equal opportunity educator and employer.
The Guided Professional Shadowing (GPS) program is a great opportunity to explore a career direction. To get the most from the experience and to best represent the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, keep in mind the following tips.

**Prepare**

Confirm the professional’s workplace location and be familiar with parking options.

Develop a list of questions you will ask the professional. For example:

- What types of skills and knowledge does one need to perform this job?
- What are some particular advantages and disadvantages of this type of work?
- What is the future demand for professionals in this line of work?
- What do you like/dislike about your work?
- How would I best acquire the necessary skills to perform this job?
- How did you go about finding this job?

Choose an appropriate outfit. As you arrange your shadowing experience, inquire about the dress code in the professional’s workplace then make a strong effort to match it. Regardless of the level of formality, plan to stay away from clothing that is athletic in nature, ripped or wrinkled, tight or revealing as well as clothing containing inappropriate logos, images and messages.

**For Women:** Pants or skirts (knee length or longer with hose) and a blouse or sweater along with closed toe leather shoes and simple jewelry and make-up.

**For Men:** Long-sleeved collared shirt with a tie or jacket along with polished leather shoes.

**Represent**

Arrive 10 minutes early.

Treat everyone you meet with respect, professionalism and appreciation. In addition to the professional with whom you are scheduled to meet, others with whom you interact could be helpful in your career path.

Greet those you meet with a firm handshake, eye-contact and enthusiasm. Think long-term and consider your first impression as the starting point to building a professional network.

“Business Casual” is likely the minimum standard for most professional settings.

**Follow Up**

Write a thank you note within 24 hours of the shadowing experience. An e-mail is appropriate if that has been your primary method of communication. A handwritten note on a formal notecard or a short typed letter would be appropriate as well. Briefly express your appreciation and mention something in particular you learned or gained from the experience. Proofread your notes carefully.

Establish a LinkedIn profile and make a connection to the professional you shadowed. Even without extensive professional experience, joining LinkedIn and learning how to use it will help you build and keep track of contacts as you move forward. LinkedIn offers several profile tools geared to current and recently graduated college students (www.linkedin.com).

Sample thank you note to professional after meeting.

Subject: Thank you

Message:

Dear Mr./Ms. Professional,

Thank you for taking time out of your schedule to give me the opportunity to meet with you and your staff. I was impressed with your organization and the kindness and courtesy I received during my visit.

Meeting and spending time with you has been a great help in guiding my future career decisions. I hope to have the opportunity to meet again in the future.

Sincerely,

Your Name, UNL student
yourname@huskers.unl.edu
Your 10 digit phone number