

## Hands-on Experiences to Research Careers and Gain Marketable Skills

Hands-on experiences help you learn information about a career that you cannot get from a book, website, or telephone conversation. They allow you to interact with people and actual work environments and "try on" skills or other aspects of work in which you are interested.

➔ **Take one or two classes** in the career areas you are considering.

### Benefits

- learn more about the career area or major
- connect with other students who may be interested in the major / career

### Helpful Tips

- some classes are designed to teach you about careers in the area, such as the class "International Careers"
- if sitting in on one or two classes, contact the professor first and ask permission in case it's a small class and so they don't think you are trying to take the class for free



➔ **Join student and professional organizations** related to your career interests.

### Benefits

- talk with students who have chosen this major/career about where they obtained related experience and what they plan to do in the career when they graduate
- attend events such as organization/company tours, professionals speaking about the career field, career fairs, projects, etc.
- find out about internship and job opportunities
- stay informed about career related workshops, seminars, and special events in the community
- get connected with professionals
- builds your resume and demonstrates leadership if you hold an office
- reduced fees for professional conferences

### Helpful Tips

- there are over 200 UWM student organizations run by students like you
- you do not need to be in a specific major or career area to join
- they may have a small membership fee, if you are not sure you want to spend the money ask if you can attend one meeting/event to help you decide if this organization is for you
- some organizations are more active than others, including more frequent meetings and events

➔ **Job shadow/observe** someone in a career of interest.

### Benefits

- get a first-hand, insider's look into what a person's job involves including the benefits and challenges
- develop a mentoring relationship with a professional for further career guidance

### Helpful Tips

- identify people to job shadow through professors, advisors, student and professional organizations, friends, family, and calling companies/organizations and asking.
- ask professionals about job shadowing opportunities when informational interviewing them
- you may observe a person for an hour, a day, or any other period of time they are willing to give
- some UWM departments such as Fine Arts, Pre-Law, Pre-Med have shadowing/mentoring programs
- some companies such as Direct Supply have job shadowing programs

➔ **Attend workshops, seminars, and special events** sponsored by the CDC, academic departments, student and professional organizations, and community groups.

Benefits

- listen to and/or network with people knowledgeable in the career field

Helpful Tips

- find out about on-campus events through your advisor, peers, professors, UWM department websites, etc
- some UWM events from past spring semesters include CDC Career Days, Criminal Justice Career Fair, Communication Career Planning Fair, So You Want to Be a Teacher Day, Social Work Field Fair
- events sponsored through businesses and community and professional organizations may be free or have a fee. For those with large fees, ask if you can attend at a reduced rate as a student or if you could attend for free if you volunteered to pass out materials, etc. Find out about these events through student organizations, local chapters of professional organizations, professors, professionals, friends, family, etc.
- examples of these events include the Forensic Science Seminar – Milwaukee County Medical Examiner’s Office (Held every October) and the Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful – Environmental Business, Industry and Government Seminar (Held every May)

➔ **Find part-time employment, volunteer work, summer jobs, and/or internships.**

Benefits

- a powerful way to explore if a career will "fit" you
- identify additional informational interviewing, networking, and job shadowing possibilities
- develop transferable and career specific skills to highlight on your resume
- makes you more marketable when you graduate

Helpful Tips

- locate these experiences through academic departments, the Career Development Center, job postings, referrals from family and friends, or by contacting employers directly
- internships can be paid, unpaid, or for course credit. The term “internship” is used loosely and can be similar to a part-time job. When inquiring about internships, do not only ask an employer if they have internships, instead ask if they have internships or part-time jobs in your career area. If you ask only about internships, an employer may say no if they define an internship as a structured program that is coordinated with UWM and then fail to mention that they have career related part-time jobs.
- volunteering has some benefits over part-time jobs such as flexible hours, small/short time commitment, and possibly course credit
- do not rule out a possible position because the deadline date has past, you don’t have all the qualifications, or you are not in the year in school requested. Be sure to call and investigate these areas further.
- sometimes the job may not be directly related to the career you are interested in, but may be in the same working or career environment
- if currently employed, ask your supervisor if you can take on additional responsibilities or projects that will allow you to gain career related skills.

**Need help identifying internships, part-time jobs, or volunteer opportunities?**

Visit the CDC website at [www.uwm.edu/Dept/CDC](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CDC)

and

**Speak with A CDC Career Resource Assistant (CRA) or Career Counselor**

Speak with Career Resource Assistant (CRA). These peer advisors are available during most CDC business hours.

Monday 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
Tues - Fri 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Speak with a Career Counselor for 10-15 minutes during Express Lane walk-in hours.

Monday 4:00 - 5:45 p.m.  
Tues & Thurs 9:30 - 11:30a.m.  
Wednesday 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
Friday 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Make a 45 minute appointment with a Career Counselor.

Call 414-229-4486 during CDC business hours to schedule an appointment.