



Shadowing/Veterinary Experience How-to

What is it?

Experience which takes place under the supervision of a veterinarian. Can be paid or volunteer.

Veterinary Experience/Shadowing provides the applicant with basic knowledge of the veterinary profession. It is recommended that shadowing experience align with the applicant's species/career interests. If you have any questions about what counts as shadowing experience vs. animal experience, please contact health.professions@wsu.edu.

How do I get it?

Get started by researching Veterinarians you would like to shadow. Search by species interest compiling a list of places to contact:

- Start with your family Vet first (if they say no, do they know anyone who allows student shadows?)
- Use your network: Do you know any vets? Do your parents? Do your friends?
- Create a list of specialties that interest you (do your research, know the professionals by name)
- Do they have a volunteer coordinator or form?
- Do you have to go through the receptionist? Be direct – ask to leave a message with the professional you are interested in shadowing. In this case, it's best to call/stop by and send a follow-up email.
- Attend conferences, lectures or club meetings to meet vets.
- Look for employment within a clinic. Build connections.
- Pay attention to the Pre-Vet Newsletter!

1) Use your contacts. Ask folks directly and ask for a specific professional! "Hello, I would like to talk to Dr. Carlson about shadowing/volunteering with him beginning May 25."

2) Follow the procedures of the organization. If there is a volunteer coordinator or volunteer tab on their website, use this method before calling or visiting in-person.

3) Go in-person* (dressed to impress) with a resume and a cover letter (examples below) explaining why you would like to shadow. Becky Jewell is happy to help you prepare these documents. **Be respectful of COVID-19 protocols*

4) You can also call and email if you aren't near the clinic. Don't just call though, email your resume and cover letter explaining why you would like to shadow at that particular clinic and then follow-up, regularly!

5) Be persistent***. Ten places may turn you down before one says 'yes'.

6) Be polite. Healthcare is a collaborative environment. People Talk.

*** It is your responsibility to follow-up and follow-up often! You are not 'bugging' them, even if it feels like it. You are not their top priority and once they hang up the phone or you leave the clinic, it's easy to forget about you. Remind them! You can't just contact a clinic one time and leave it up to them.



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Example script (telephone, email, or in-person):

*Hello. My name is **Becky Jewell** and I'm a **sophomore** at Washington State University. I'm currently majoring in **Basket Weaving** and I intend to apply to veterinary school after I complete my degree. **Describe how you heard about the clinic.** I am writing/calling/visiting today to ask how I might pursue a shadowing opportunity with **Dr. Carlson** (and mention when – **As soon as possible, beginning in May, etc.**) Please accept my resume & cover letter which highlights all of my experience working with animals and my reliability as a future volunteer/I have attached my resume & cover letter which highlights all of my experience working with animals and my reliability as a future volunteer.*

-Thank you for your time. When would be a good time for me to follow-up on this request?

Cover Letter Example:

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. _____

*I am student at Washington State University studying **YOUR MAJOR** and I am very interested veterinary medicine as a future career path. **State specifically your species interest and why you are interested in shadowing at this specific practice.** How does this doctor/practice connect with your future goals? I am writing you now hoping that you might be willing to let me spend **a day/week/month/time range** observing you so I can learn more about this career. **Share briefly what other professional exposure you have had that has prepared you to make the most out of an opportunity at the particular clinic.***

If you are open to it, it would help me greatly to be able to quietly observe you as you go about your usual schedule.

*I realize that your day is busy and your time is valuable. **To make it easier on you, I will call/email you the week of June 27 to check in with you and hopefully set up a time.** Provide contact information.*

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Again, you will need to follow-up with each clinic that you contact, probably several times.