

Student handout 1.4

Questionnaire: job shadowing

This questionnaire may serve as a starting point when you are preparing for a job-shadowing project. Adapt or extend it as you think necessary. If you intend to write a report to be added to your portfolio, for example, the key questions can serve as a guideline for the framework of contents.

A questionnaire is the best instrument with which to obtain a clearly structured and detailed description of a job. A diary is more appropriate if you want to record your personal experiences and feelings while performing a job, e.g. during an internship.

1. Place of work

- With whom do you co-operate? Who depends on your work? On whose work do you depend?
- Is your place of work typical for this job/job category?
- ...

2. Personal responsibility and conditions of work

- What is your position in this company/office/... ?
- To what extent do you decide what your tasks are? If you do this, how do you do so? If not, who assigns your tasks to you?
- Please describe what kind of responsibility has been assigned to you.
- To what extent are you free in your management and use of time? (Working time, working hours, free time, holidays.)
- How long do you work on an average per day/per week?
- Do you work in shifts – at night – at weekends?
- What income may I expect in this job? Are there any data publicly available? (*Clearly this is an important piece of information for you, but many people are reluctant to give details about their earnings, and understandably so. So you should explain why this question interests you, and find out what information your interview partner is willing to give.*)
- Is it possible to combine your job with having a family? Is it possible to work part time?
- ...

3. Activities and tasks

- What are the core activities in your work?
- Please describe a typical working day or week.
- Are there any specific/unique features in your work?
- ...

4. Job requirements

- What must a person who does your work be good at, and what is less important?
- To what extent must you undergo in-service training?
- Are there any key technologies or key skills that you must master?
- Do you experience competition in your job?
- ...

5. Choosing a job, career experience

- What kind of training is required to qualify for your job?
- Please describe your career development.
- Would you recommend anyone to follow the same path as you did? Would that be possible today?
- What ideas, wishes and expectations did you have in mind when you chose this career?
- Have your wishes been fulfilled?
- Would you choose the same career a second time, if you could?
- ...

6. Job prospects

Forecasts about future business and job developments should be read with caution. But it is worth a try to find out what can be said about future manpower development.

- How many applicants are needed for this job today? Is it possible to forecast future developments?
- What skills and qualifications will be expected from future applicants?
- What is the age group and gender structure in your job? *(The answer to this question may allow you to anticipate the job opportunities in future years.)*
- ...

7. Checking other sources of information

- National or local labour office.
- Internet.
- ...

Conclusion

In the light of all the information that I have received, is the job I have studied an attractive option for me?

Whatever the answer – yes, no or not sure – what are the reasons for your decision?

Have the criteria that guided you in your choice proved viable and relevant?

Clearly it is more pleasing to answer the questions above with “yes”. But even if your answers are negative, the results are important for your future development. You have been saved from choosing the wrong job because your assumptions and expectations were unsound, and you come away with a clearer idea of what criteria you should apply in choosing a job.

Acknowledgments

If your report is read by others (which is usually the case), you should thank your interview partner(s), and everybody who supported you.