



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY Health Professions Advisory Office

Initial Observation / Shadow Request Sample Request E-mail

The following template is designed to help you compose an e-mail to request an opportunity to shadow and/or conduct an informational interview. Where there are blanks, fill in the appropriate information that is specific to the person you are contacting.

Feel free to personalize the language below, *but please be professional.* Read over the text once before you send the e-mail to make sure that there aren't any typos and that you haven't left in any text from the template that shouldn't be included.

DO NOT USE the Vanderbilt HPAO logo above. We as an office do not "endorse" your individual request to any provider but wanted to provide a helpful sample template below *to get you started*.

Dear Dr./Ms./Mr. _____,

My name is Cornelius Vanderbilt, and I am currently a [year in school] at Vanderbilt University. I am in the process of exploring careers in healthcare, and I am very interested in the field of (e.g., dentistry, occupational therapy, pediatric oncology, etc.) _____. I am in the process of seeking opportunities to observe / shadow a healthcare professional and/or informational interviewing to better understand what it is like to be a _____.

I found your e-mail through the _____ website (or, alternatively, I was given your contact information by your colleague _____). If you are willing and your _____ (name of specific hospital/clinic/office) allows students to observe / shadow, I would welcome an opportunity to observe your work, if possible.

I would also value the opportunity to have a short conversation over coffee or tea (my treat!) to hear more about your experiences and to get your advice on how to prepare for a career in _____.

I realize that you are extremely busy and that your time is valuable. If you have any questions or concerns, you can reach me by _____ (your professional e-mail) or _____ (phone number/###-###-####).

Thank you for your help.

Best Regards,

Cornelius Vanderbilt (*your name*)

If the answer is “No.”

Chances are, you will probably get turned down several times before someone says yes. Don't get discouraged. This is often a normal part of the process. There are ways to leverage a “no” into other opportunities. Consider using this e-mail template to try expanding your network or to line up an opportunity for an informational interview.

As a general rule, it is always a good idea to **thank a professional** for responding, even if you don't get the answer you were hoping for. This keeps the relationship going, which might open up other opportunities down the line.

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. _____,

Thank you for taking the time to respond to my e-mail. I understand that it is not possible to observe / shadow you at this time, but I appreciate that you took the time to follow up with me about my initial request.

I would still welcome the opportunity to talk with you about your experiences as a _____ if that is possible. I also wanted to ask if you would be willing to put me in touch with a colleague or two that might be willing and available to observe / shadow. Thank you again for all of your help.

Best Regards,

Cornelius Vanderbilt (*your name*)