

Work Shadow: Guidelines for Employers

Thank you for participating in our Work Shadow Program! Below are the key guidelines to help you provide a meaningful and engaging experience for your student shadow(s).

Program Objectives

The Work Shadow Program allows students to:

- Gain first hand exposure to your industry and workplace culture.
- Learn about specific roles, projects, and day-to-day responsibilities.
- Explore career pathways by observing and interacting with professionals like you.

As a host, your role is to provide insights, guidance, and an authentic glimpse into your professional world.

Preparation Guidelines

Once you register, your work shadow opportunity will be added to Handshake. Students will then be invited to explore the compiled opportunities and sign up for those that align with their career goals, majors, and areas of interest. After a match is made, we send you an email with your student's name, along with recommendations on how to proceed.

Once the student completes their work shadow preparation session, they will reach out to you for guidance on how the shadow day will unfold. This initial contact is also a time for the student to give you an indication of what he or she is interested in observing and gaining from the experience.

1. Pre-Event Preparation

- **Share Details About the Day:** Before the work shadow day, please share with your matched student(s) a brief itinerary and any preparation they should complete beforehand:
 1. Notify the student of any required waivers or paperwork to complete prior to their visit.
 2. Confirm the date and time of the shadowing day with the student.
 3. Provide information on parking, directions, and dress code expectations.
 4. Provide entrance procedures (is there a security entrance, badge needed or check in process?)
 5. Will the student need to bring their lunch or will one be provided?
 6. Share the confidentiality policy. Will students be able to take photographs etc.?
 7. Share a schedule for the day, along with any additional information that may help them prepare for their visit to your organization.
- **Set Expectations:** Clarify what the student can expect to observe or participate in during their visit. If students don't proactively share their interests and goals, we encourage you to guide students through this conversation as well.

- **Prepare Your Team:** Inform colleagues about the student's visit and encourage their participation where relevant.

2. Structure for a Successful Day

While flexibility is encouraged, consider including the following:

- **Welcome and Orientation:** Begin the day with a warm welcome, introduce the student to your team, and provide an overview of the schedule.
- **Workplace Tour:** Offer a brief tour to familiarize the student with your workplace environment. Share your organization's mission and vision.
- **Shadowing Activities:** Allow the student to observe your daily tasks, meetings, or project work. Encourage them to ask questions.
- **Informational Interview:** Dedicate time to share your career journey, industry insights, and advice. Optional - Review their resume and share feedback.
- **Interactive Component:** If possible, involve the student in a hands-on activity or task relevant to your field.
- **Wrap-Up and Reflection:** Conclude the day with a discussion about what they learned and answer any remaining questions.

3. Transportation and Housing

Many students choose work shadows close to home, so housing is not an issue. Other students, however, are more than willing to travel. In these situations, some hosts provide housing. If that is not possible, students typically obtain lodging at a nearby hotel for multi-day shadows. Any housing and transportation costs are covered by the student. Students are encouraged to inquire with their assigned hosts regarding any hotel, transportation, or parking options/recommendations that might work best for the experience but it is the student's responsibility to coordinate these details.

4. Communication and Feedback

- **Be Approachable:** Create a welcoming environment where the student feels comfortable asking questions.
- **Provide Constructive Feedback:** Share actionable advice or observations to help the student grow.
- **Seek Feedback:** At the end of the day, ask the student about their experience to identify ways to improve future work shadow opportunities. Career Success will also ask the student to complete an evaluation.
- **Complete Survey:** Fill out the Career Success Work Shadow Survey sent after the experience to share your feedback and insights with us.

5. Sample Schedules for Shadow Days

Sample 1

9:00-10:00	Tour, introduction of department, discussion of mission, vision, and organization's goals
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10:00-10:30	Describe your career journey and what your current position entails (Describe what you like and what can be challenging). Review your job description as a guide
10:30-12: 00	Staff meeting and/or observe projects/work tasks (could include showing computer programs your organization uses, etc.), allow student to engage in part of the project or task
12:00-1:00	Lunch (optional) & closing reflection

Sample 2

12:00-1:00	Lunch (optional)
1:00-2:00	Staff meeting and/or tour
2:00-2:30	Informational interview or describe your career journey and what your current position entails. Review your job description as a guide
2:30-3:00	Resume review
3:00-4:00	Final observations and/or more hands on tasks & closing reflection

Sample 3

9:00-10:00	Tour, introduction of department, discussion of mission, vision, and organization's goals
10:00-10:30	Describe your career journey and what your current position entails
10:30-12:00	Observe projects/work tasks, allow student to engage in part of the project or task
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:00	Staff meeting
2:00-2:30	Informational interview
2:30-3:00	Resume review
3:00-4:00	Final observations and/or more hands on tasks & closing reflection

Rights and Responsibilities

As a host, you're always welcome to skip any questions or requests that feel inappropriate or involve confidential information. If any behavior from the student doesn't align with your workplace expectations, please feel free to address it directly and let our team at Career Success know right away.

We encourage you to spend time engaging with the student, whether that means sharing insights about your work, introducing them to colleagues, or involving them in a project or task during their visit. While it's helpful to avoid too much downtime, please don't feel pressured to guess what the student will find most interesting. They've been asked to share their specific interests with you to help guide the day. They have also been briefed on

maintaining professional behavior in the workplace and advised to research your organization and industry prior to the work shadow experience.

Discussion Questions for Alumni Hosts (optional)

Below are some topics you may want to share with your student:

Occupational field

- How has it changed from the time you graduated?
- How do you see it affected, if at all, by the economy?
- What graduate degrees are prominent in the industry?

Current job

- What do you like best and least about your job?
- What types of people do you work with and for?
- What is your current role and responsibility?
- How did you get your current position?

Career Future/Alternatives

- What other jobs and careers could you go into?
- If things develop as you would like, what types of career goals do you see for yourself?
- Before choosing this path, what other employers were you considering?

Lifestyle

- What obligation does your work place upon your personal time?
- How much flexibility do you have in terms of dress, hours of work, vacation schedule?
- How often do people in your line of work change jobs?

Advice for a New Professional

- What do you look for in a new hire?
- What keywords do you look for on a resume?

College Activities

- Which campus activities helped you prepare for your current professional position?
- Which courses or activities do you wish you had taken or been a member of that would have better prepared you for what you are doing right now?

Feedback

- What should the student think about for future job shadow experiences?

Key Dates and Contact Information

Here are some important dates and points of contact to keep in mind:

- **Opportunity Live on Handshake:** January
- **Matches Finalized:** End of January
- **Optional Employer Preparation Session:** February
- **Work Shadow Dates:** Spring Break

For any questions or additional support, please contact us at bellamysankard@longwood.edu or 1-434-395-2681.