

# JOB SHADOWING EXPERIENCE



## STUDENT GUIDE

# JOB SHADOWING EXPERIENCE



## WHAT IS JOB SHADOWING?

Suffolk University's Job Shadowing Experience takes place during fall and spring semester and provides an opportunity for students to explore a profession or industry they are interested in pursuing. Based on career goals and major or program, students will be matched with a host who is a Suffolk alum or an employer partner. Students will connect with their assigned host during one work day either virtually or in-person at the workplace to learn more about the host's professional background, job responsibilities, industry, and current company.

## BENEFITS TO PARTICIPATING

Job Shadowing provides a valuable opportunity for students to build their networks and learn about specific careers firsthand out in the real world. They will gain insights from industry insiders, learn about how their academic background will translate to a particular career path, gain an understanding of key skills and qualifications for their chosen field, and observe a typical day of a working professional.

**Shadowing may also have the potential to lead to a future job or internship, although the primary purpose of the program is networking, exploration, and experiential learning.**

## WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

The program is open to all students. Everyone is welcome to participate including undergraduate students from all class years and majors, graduate students, domestic and international students.

**International students do not need work authorization or CPT/OPT because no hands-on work is being performed, only observation and discussion.**

**There is no cost to apply or to participate. The job shadowing program is unpaid.**



# GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

Suffolk believes that every student should engage in: ongoing career planning; articulating their professional value, building social capital; social identity reflection; experiential career development; strategic career transitions. Job shadowing is one way that students can engage in these career development activities. Please see the last page for a more detailed explanation of our “everyys.

## FORMAT

The shadowing experience may take place either virtually or in-person at the host’s workplace. The host will decide on the modality based on their schedule, company policies, availability, and location, among other factors. The majority of host organizations are located in the Greater Boston area, but some are outside of this geographic area or are fully remote companies.

The host will communicate their preferred shadowing modality directly to the assigned student prior to the shadow day.

Some students will meet one-on-one with a host, while others may be assigned to a small group together with other students. Some companies choose to have students engage with multiple professionals at the host company throughout the day, rather than one individual host.

## CAREER COMMUNITIES

Suffolk University’s Center for Career Equity, Development & Success organizes Job Shadowing around its Career Communities: nine industry-aligned groups which promote connections between students, faculty, alumni and employers with shared interests. Students will be asked to select one or two Career Communities which relate most closely to their interests and will be paired with hosts from those same areas. Listed below are the nine communities along with majors and programs which are typically associated:

- ACCOUNTING & FINANCE - Accounting, Finance, Global Business, Business Economics
- HEALTHCARE & WELLNESS - Radiation Therapy, Medical Dosimetry, Biology, Healthcare Administration, Psychology, Mental Health Counseling
- HUMAN SERVICES & SOCIAL IMPACT - Psychology, Sociology, Criminal Justice, Education, Mental Health Counseling, Non-Profit Management, Human Resources/DEI
- HUMANITIES & THE ARTS - History, Global Culture, English, Global Languages, Interior Design & Architecture, Graphic Design, Fine Arts, Arts Administration, Theatre
- JOURNALISM, MEDIA & COMMUNICATION - Journalism, Media/Film, Communications, Graphic Design, Integrated Marketing, Social Media
- MANAGEMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP - Management, Entrepreneurship, Economics, Organizational Leadership, Business Administration (MBA), Real Estate
- MARKETING, ANALYTICS, ADVERTISING & PUBLIC RELATIONS - Marketing, Business, Data Analytics, Global Marketing, Information Systems, Advertising/PR
- PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, GOVERNMENT & LAW - Law & Paralegal Studies, Criminal Justice, Public Policy, Political Science, Restorative Justice, Victim Advocacy
- STEM & SUSTAINABILITY - Biology, Biochemistry, Business Analytics, Information Systems, Chemistry, Computer Science, Environmental Studies

Learn more about Career Communities:

[suffolk.edu/career-center/career-communities](https://suffolk.edu/career-center/career-communities)

# TIMEFRAME & JOB SHADOWING CYCLES

For the 2023-2024 academic year, job shadowing will occur twice, once during fall semester and once during the spring semester. Students and hosts are welcome to apply to participate in more than one cycle. Please note that a match is not guaranteed for each cycle so selecting multiple cycles on the application form does not mean you will shadow each time, simply that your profile will be reviewed and considered as a possible match with a host.

## FALL SEMESTER

CYCLE 1:  
OCTOBER - JANUARY

Application Deadline:  
September 20th

Orientation Deadline:  
September 27th

## SPRING SEMESTER

CYCLE 2:  
FEBRUARY - MAY

Application Deadline:  
January 31st

Orientation Deadline:  
February 7th

## LENGTH OF SHADOWING EXPERIENCE

Job shadowing is a short-term, one-day experience ranging from a few hours to one full work day.

Occasionally, hosts may invite students to return for additional visits or ask them to participate in other company or industry-related programs or events. However, the student is not expected nor required to engage in multiple visits and is welcome to decline if they are not available or not interested in future participation with the host beyond the shadow day.

Students are not expected to perform work or complete projects for the host or their company on an on-going basis, but can discuss the possibility of future internship, volunteer, or work arrangements if they are interested in continuing to be involved with the company.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Students interested in pursuing a job shadowing experience must complete an application which includes:

- A copy of your current resume, which will later be shared with the assigned host
- A brief questionnaire regarding your career interests, goals, and other preferences

The application will open early in the fall semester and remain open until the last spring cycle deadline. Students may access the application from our website ([suffolk.edu/career-center](http://suffolk.edu/career-center)) under the "Events & Signature Programs" section. The Career Center will also promote the launch and close of applications through the Career Corner Newsletter.

## ORIENTATION

After applying, students will be emailed orientation materials which will be completed by a given deadline. Steps include:

- Watch a recorded video presentation which will ensure you are prepared for the experience
- Electronically sign program agreement and waiver forms

# HOST ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

After students have completed the orientation, the Career Center staff will engage in a process to review all completed applications and identify hosts who are most relevant to student interests.

In order for job shadowing to be a positive learning experience and a valuable time commitment for everyone, we will only pair students and hosts when career interests and professional experiences are closely aligned. However, we are committed to making the Job Shadowing Experience accessible to as many students as possible and will recruit new hosts on a recurring basis throughout the year to strive to match the interest areas that students have indicated.

After the orientation completion deadline:

- Career center team members will carefully review student and host applications and determine who will be paired together
- Keep in mind that we are limited to hosts who volunteer to be part of the program, so your assigned host may not meet all of the preferences indicated in the application
- Both students and hosts will be notified by email approximately 2 weeks after the orientation deadline date
- Students and hosts will then communicate directly with each other to confirm the date, time, length of visit, modality and other details
- For students who are balancing multiple responsibilities (academics, work, clubs, family commitments) and are having difficulty finding time for shadowing, consider scheduling the experience after classes end or before the semester starts (December/January), during spring break, or in early May. It is important to have at least one half day (4 hours) available to dedicate to shadowing.

If students experience any challenges communicating with hosts, contact the career center for assistance: [careers@suffolk.edu](mailto:careers@suffolk.edu)

## REFLECTION

The final step of the Job Shadowing Experience is for students to reflect on their experience, what they learned, and what actions they may take moving forward. To facilitate this process, the career center staff will share questions to think about and will ask students to share feedback.

Students will also complete a brief evaluation survey where they can assess the program and their experience with their assigned host.

# JOB SHADOWING

## SAMPLE ACTIVITIES



Each shadowing experience is unique because participating employers and alumni represent a wide variety of industries, companies, work environments, positions, and responsibilities. No two shadow days are the same, but here are a few ideas about activities that students may engage in:...

- Company tour or presentation about the history, mission, values, culture, priorities, roles, and leadership
- Informational interview with host regarding their professional background and academic history, how they decided upon current career path, and their job search strategies
- Lunch or coffee with host and colleagues for informal networking and discussion
- Observe meetings (virtually or in-person) with clients or team members
- Follow host throughout a typical day's activities
- See demonstrations of software programs or technical skills typically used on the job
- Review examples of communication materials or other relevant documents (new client outreach, marketing campaign, sales emails, case management follow-up, data analysis presentation, policy proposal, legal memo, etc.)
- Discuss examples of past projects or key initiatives host has completed
- Meet with small panel of current interns or entry-level employees regarding experiences at the company and Q+A discussion
- Learn about current and future industry trends, best practices, challenges, growth opportunities, and other considerations related to the profession
- Complete a small assignment, such as conducting research on a given topic, writing a sample email or social post, and discussing the work with host
- Receive feedback about resume and LinkedIn profile
- Become aware of professional associations, employee resource groups, membership organizations, publications, industry websites or other resources

# JOB SHADOWING

## EXPERIENCE & OUR EVERYS



Job shadowing is an experiential learning opportunity which can be a valuable part of the career exploration process. We believe each student should be prepared to ...



**Make a Career Plan:** Engaging students in developing a personalized career plan has been identified as one of the high-impact practices that lead to greater career success and fulfillment.



**Communicate Their Brand:** Being able to talk not just about one's past experiences, but also about the unique skills and identities one has developed, and how those can be applied in a given job or organization.



**Grow Their Network:** Engaging in the ongoing practice of developing new professional relationships, adding value to one's professional network, and knowing how to benefit from that network.



**Foster Career Equity:** Being aware of the social and structural biases at play in one's field and the world of work more generally, both to better leverage supports one may benefit from based on their own identities and to create a more equitable and just workplace for everyone.



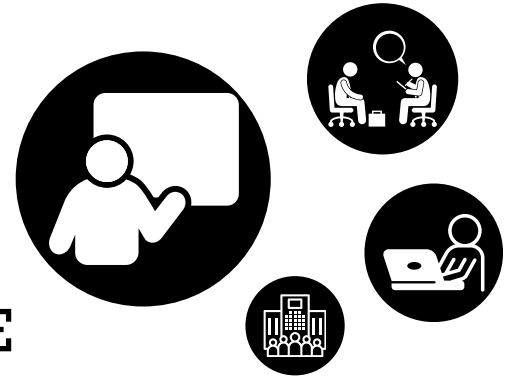
**Gain Experience:** Recognizing how all experiences in and out of the classroom are opportunities to become more career ready, while having the tools and skills to make the most out of work-integrated learning opportunities such as student employment, client projects, and internships.



**Launch Their Career:** Not just "finding a job," but strategically seeking out desirable positions, weighing options and offers, negotiating an appropriate salary, and transitioning successfully from college to career in a manner that supports future career mobility.

# JOB SHADOWING

## ADVICE FOR A SUCCESSFUL JOB SHADOWING EXPERIENCE



## ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION

Employer and alumni hosts take time out of their busy schedules to voluntarily meet with students to conduct job shadowing, so it is important to respect their time and effort by being fully engaged, attentive, and punctual. Avoid multitasking while shadowing and minimize distractions. Good communication is critical to the success of job shadowing, so be sure to notify your host in advance if you have any questions about meeting modality, transportation, arrival time, location, dress code, or any other aspects of the day. Be sure to confirm you have received and read all information they share. Respond in a timely manner to all requests, such as forms which need to be signed, identification documents, or scheduling inquiries.

In the event that you are running late for your meeting, or an emergency arises and you are no longer able to attend, please notify your host as soon as possible. For cancellations, suggest an alternative meeting time, date, or modality.

If poor weather conditions are a concern, reach out to your host and ask promptly about the possibility of rescheduling or moving to a virtual format.

If you fail to attend your shadowing day, especially without providing notice, it will reflect poorly on you as a student, as well as on the career center and on Suffolk University. Missing your shadow day can potentially affect future job or internship prospects. We encourage you to take the assignment seriously and make every effort to attend your shadow day as scheduled.

If you need assistance communicating with your host, contact the career center at (617) 573-8480.

## RESEARCH

Take time to research the company and host prior to the shadow day in order to make the most of the experience. Consider doing the following...

- Review the company website and LinkedIn page
- Check Handshake for company information, events, positions
- Connect with your host via LinkedIn and review their profile
- Search for publications or recent articles about the company



# PREPARATION

During your shadow day, you may be asked to share information about yourself and your academic and/or professional experiences. Think about how you might respond to questions such as:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why did you choose this major?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your future career plans?
- What are your long-term and short-term goals?
- What do you hope to gain from the job shadowing experience?

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

One of the key ways you can show interest and engagement while shadowing is by asking good open-ended questions. Here are some examples...

### Company & Job Questions:

- What do you like most about working at this company?
- What entry-level job opportunities or internships are available here?
- What opportunities for career growth are available in this company or industry?
- What skills and personal qualities are most important here?
- What is your favorite aspect of your position?
- What is most challenging about the position?
- What technology or software programs do you use most often?

### Career Advice:

- What advice would you give to someone who is starting out in their career?
- Did anything surprise you, or was unexpected, about this career?
- What was your first job? What did you learn from the experience?
- Are there any professional groups you suggest joining? Websites or journals to follow online?
- What did you study? What internships or work experiences were most valuable for you?

## DRESS CODE

Be sure to make a great first impression by wearing attire appropriate for the workplace. Dress codes can vary widely depending on the industry, position, and work environment. For example:

- Technology companies and start-ups may be casual, or smart-casual
- Fully virtual companies or roles may be casual
- Finance, banking, and law firms are traditionally formal
- Non-profits, educational organizations, government agencies, medical offices, and many other fields are often business casual

Ask your host about expectations for their particular industry and company. Review a guide to different dress code standards, provided by Indeed, [here](#).

If you need assistance with workplace attire, please visit our Career Closet where you can select clothing items to keep. Make an appointment on [Handshake](#) or email [careers@suffolk.edu](mailto:careers@suffolk.edu) to find a time to browse our selections. Learn more: <https://www.suffolk.edu/career-center/about-the-career-center/career-closet>

## FOLLOW-UP

After your shadowing experience, remember to thank the host for taking the time to meet with you. If you have not already connected on LinkedIn, be sure to do so after your shadow day. Also, connect with anyone else you met during the experience.

Here is an example of a thank you note which can be sent by mail or email...

*Dear [Name of Host],*

*Thank you for allowing me shadow at (company) and providing me with the opportunity to gain more information about the (name of) field. It was very helpful to learn about your position and hear your insights about this industry. Having the chance to meet you and your colleagues made me even more interested in (major/career of interest)! I hope to have more conversations with you in the future. Thank you for your support!*

*Sincerely,*

*[Your Name]*

## TIPS FOR VIRTUAL JOB SHADOWING

Ensure you have a stable internet connection with high-quality audio and video. Test your technology in advance and be ready to start the shadowing experience right on time.

- Create a back-up plan in case of a bad connection
- Have the host's phone number and email address readily accessible if you need to reach them quickly
- Log in a few minutes early to check technology
- Use a headset when possible to optimize sound quality
- Mute microphone when not speaking to reduce noise
- Have a good light source so your host can see you clearly without shadows
- Prop your laptop so your camera is at eye level
- Use a neutral background with minimal visual activity
- Find a quiet place with no distractions
- Contact the career center if you need any support (quiet space, access to technology)