



## **SnapShot Job Shadowing Resource Guide**



## Overview

*SnapShot* is a job shadowing program that will provide you with an excellent opportunity to learn about a career area as well as make professional connections with Hamilton alumni and parents. It is a critical component of the Explore portion of our *Find Your Future* career development curriculum.

*SnapShot* is designed for first-years, sophomores, and juniors who are early in their career exploration process. The program invites alumni and parents to be sponsors. Sponsors have been asked to plan an agenda that includes 3-4 meaningful virtual career-related experiences for you at their place of work during January. **All questions should be sent to Abby Taylor, director of employer engagement, at [aetaylor@hamilton.edu](mailto:aetaylor@hamilton.edu)**

## Purpose and goals of *SnapShot*

The purpose of the SnapShot shadowing program is to assist you with career exploration.

We'd like this experience to help you develop/explore:

- Self-awareness and self-confidence
- A career field of interest to determine if it is a good fit
- Resources for exploring careers
- Networking skills and professional connections
- Business correspondence
- Communication etiquette

## 2022 - 23 Winter Break Timeline

November 7-30: Register for the virtual Orientation Workshop on Handshake. Watch the required Orientation Session video and complete the required Orientation Quiz. (video and quiz form will be provided after registration)

December 1: Sign up for a Sponsor on <https://my.hamilton.edu/after/careercenter/hcn>

December 27-January 13: Shadowing opportunities will take place between these dates

## Steps for Identifying & Contacting Sponsor

1. Go to <https://my.hamilton.edu/after/careercenter/hcn> to search for sponsors of interest
2. Identify your first choice of sponsor
3. Edit email template located on My Hamilton
  - a. provide dates available
  - b. include several sentences about yourself such as your intended major, career interests, relevant volunteer work, etc.
  - c. attach a copy of your resume (encouraged, but optional)
4. Send an email. Please note, until you have emailed the sponsor, that specific sponsor's information is visible and available to other students. But once you send the email, the individual is hidden from view, no other student can select that sponsor, and you have committed yourself to follow up.
5. In a subsequent email exchange with your sponsor, confirm the date and time and additional details (e.g., directions, appropriate attire)

## Preparing for your shadowing experience

1. Research the field, organization, AND your shadow sponsor. Review the organization's website, including its mission, services, clients, etc. to gain a basic understanding of the organization. Check to see if your sponsor has a profile on LinkedIn.
2. Prepare questions to ask your sponsor and her/his colleagues. What do you want/need to know about the field and job to assess whether or not it is a good fit for you? (see "Sample Questions" in appendices as a start)
3. Past sponsors have indicated that it would be helpful to have a brief phone conversation before the day of shadowing as a preliminary introduction as well as to explore how the day might be scheduled. We've encouraged sponsors to recommend a preliminary phone call but you should feel free to request this as well.
4. Prepare to answer questions about yourself: your interests, your academics, your skills, the career-related experiences you've already had, what was it about this specific career area that inspired your interest? What would you like to learn through your shadowing experience?
5. Make sure you have appropriate attire; except for very formal business settings (e.g., finance and consulting) "business casual" is usually a safe bet. Check with your sponsor for details about workplace attire.
6. Determine if your SnapShot will take place virtually or in-person and make the appropriate arrangements.

## Emergencies and Cancellations

- ❖ What to do if you can NOT shadow (e.g., you get sick or have another legitimate reason for not being able to follow through.) If on the day of, **contact your shadow sponsor AND the Career Center by phone** to ensure the reception of the message. It is not appropriate to email. If it is a day or more before your shadow day and you have a legitimate reason for canceling, explain your situation and ask if it would be possible to postpone to a different day – including March break or even summer. If your sponsor cancels, try to reschedule.

## During your shadowing experience

### Make a Great Impression!

- Dress appropriately as advised by your shadow sponsor.
- Greet your shadow sponsor professionally: smile, look him/her directly in the eye, address him/her as "Mr.," "Ms." or "Dr.," and introduce yourself.
- Engage/be attentive and respectful.
- Ask for the first and last names and email addresses of the people you meet (helpful for writing thank you notes as well as for networking purposes.)
- Thank your sponsor and others throughout the day!

## What to Expect

Experiences vary widely but may include: observation of typical activities (with other staff, clients, board members, etc.), meeting/speaking with a colleague in the same or a different department, participating in phone calls or Zoom meetings.

### Sample Agenda One - Single Day Snapshot:

9-9:30: Overview of sponsor's career trajectory and current role within the organization  
9:30-10:30: Participation in an internal team strategy meeting with other staff  
10:30-11: Introductions to an entry-level colleague on the team for a virtual coffee chat  
11-11:15: Break  
11:15-11:30: Suggested resources and LinkedIn interests to follow for further career exploration  
11:30-12: Participate in an external client call

### Sample Agenda Two - Multi-Day Snapshot:

Monday: Overview of sponsor's career trajectory and current role within the organization  
Tuesday: Participate in an external client call  
Wednesday: Review and offer feedback on resume and LinkedIn profile  
Thursday: Meet with the team to discuss different roles in the company  
Friday: Introduction to networking contacts both inside and outside of the Hamilton community

## Follow-Up

- Within 3 days, send a thank you note. It can be an email or hand-written.
- Complete the "Post-Program Evaluation and Questionnaire" which will be provided to students prior to their shadowing experience(s). This step is crucial to confirm whether or not you completed shadowing/had a good experience/learned what we hoped you'd learn.
- Follow up with your new networking contacts (send an email a few months after your experience to let them know how you are doing, about your plans for the summer, etc. Possibly link to them on LinkedIn)

## *Appendices*

- A. Email template introducing yourself to sponsor
- B. Student Preparation Work-sheet
- C. Sample thank-you email/note to sponsor(s)
- D. Sample questions

### **Email template introducing yourself to sponsor**

SUBJECT LINE: Hamilton SnapShot Shadowing Program

Dear [Salutation (e.g., Ms./Mr./Dr.)] [Last Name]:

Thank you for being a sponsor for the SnapShot job shadowing program. I'm looking forward to meeting you and learning more about your work at <name of employer>. I am available any day between <month/day> and <month/day> other than <date(s) you are not available> when I have a prior commitment. Please let me know whether you would prefer we meet in person or virtually. It would also be helpful to know any specific instructions regarding appropriate attire.

<You may wish to include several sentences about yourself such as your intended major, career interests, relevant volunteer work, etc. Optional: "Attached is my resume to give you a sense of what I have been involved with at Hamilton".>

If you think it would be helpful to speak briefly in preparation for the day of shadowing, I'm happy to have a phone conversation. You can reach me at <email address> or <cell phone #>. Thanks again.

Sincerely,

<Name> <Class year>

## Student Preparation Worksheet

To ensure that you maximize the benefit of participating in this shadowing program, you must prepare for this experience. This includes thinking about what you hope to get out of the day and familiarizing yourself with the sponsor's career field, company, and career path.

What are 2-3 personal goals for the day?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

It's important to research a bit about the industry or career area you will be exploring.

What are 2-3 reasons you are interested in learning more about this industry?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are 2-3 things you find interesting about the sponsor's organization/company? (check their website)

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are 2-3 things you find interesting about the sponsor's own career path? (check LinkedIn)

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are 2 - 3 things you would like to experience or learn about during your day of shadowing?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Thank You Note

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. \_\_\_\_\_,

**1st paragraph - Use this paragraph to thank the host for taking the time to meet with you.** Thank you for allowing me to visit you yesterday. I realize that this took time away from your regular responsibilities, and I am grateful for all the information that you were able to provide regarding your job at [name of employer].

**2nd paragraph – Talk about what you enjoyed during the visit and specifically how the visit helped you solidify your career interests.**

Last night, I talked to my family about my experience at [name of employer]. I became more convinced that I want to pursue a career in [career field]. I am glad you gave me ideas about which classes I should take while at Hamilton. I plan to take more math and computer classes next year as you suggested. -OR

I found the tour of the facility and the career-related information you shared to be extremely valuable. Being able to talk to you and your colleagues helped me learn more about the field and confirm my interest. I specifically enjoyed attending a staff meeting to experience some of the everyday issues that can arise in an office setting. Thank you for answering all of my questions; the information was very educational.

**3rd paragraph – Reiterate your appreciation for their time.**

Thank you again for giving me this valuable learning experience.

Sincerely,

[Your name]



## Sample Questions to ask the various people you will meet during your day of shadowing

You will probably ask 5-10 questions in any given informational interview, depending on how much time the person has available. Choose your questions carefully, and select them according to what will generate the most helpful information for YOU!

The Fundamentals (these are probably the most important to ask):

- How did you get started in this field?
- What do you like about your job? What do you not like about your job?

Present Job:

- Describe what you do during a typical work week.
- What skills or talents are most essential to be effective in this job?
- What are the greatest challenges you must deal with?
- What do you find most rewarding about the work itself, apart from salary, fringe benefits, travel, etc.?

Preparation:

- What educational degrees, licenses, etc. are required for entry into this field?
- What kinds of prior experiences are essential?
- What did you personally do to prepare yourself for this work?

Lifestyle:

- What obligations does your workplace put upon you outside of the ordinary work week?
- How much flexibility do you have in terms of dress, hours of work, vacation schedule, etc.?

Hiring Decisions:

- If you were to hire someone to work with you today, which of the following factors would be most important in your hiring decision, and why? (educational credentials, past work experiences, personality, personal attributes, specific skills, talents, applicant's knowledge of your organization, your department, your job)

Supply/Demand:

- What types of employers hire people in your line of work? Where are they located?
- How do people find out about these jobs? Are they advertised?
- Is turnover high? How does one move up with your organization?
- Do many people in your line of work accept positions abroad? Where? Why?
- How much do wages or salaries vary in your line of work (by the employer, region, etc.)?

Career Future:

- If things develop as you would like, where do you see yourself five years from now?
- If your job was suddenly eliminated, what different kinds of work could you do?
- How rapidly is your career field growing? How would you predict future prospects?

Advice:

- How well suited is my background for this type of work?
- What kinds of experiences, paid or otherwise, would you most strongly recommend?
- Do you know of anyone else in this field that you think would be beneficial for me to speak with? (ask for specific names) May I have permission to use your name when I call or contact them?