

**SNAP**



**Shot**

**Virtual Job Shadowing  
Resource Guide**

## Overview

*SnapShot: a virtual day in the life* 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 alumni and parents. It is a critical component of the Explore portion of our *Find Your Future* career development model.

*SnapShot: a virtual day in the life* is designed for first-year, sophomore, and junior students who are early in their career exploration process. The program targets alumni and parents as 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 Margaret Schilling '91, employer development specialist, at [mschilli@hamilton.edu](mailto:mschilli@hamilton.edu).**

### **Purpose and goals of *SnapShot: a virtual day in the life***

The *purpose* of the *SnapShot: a virtual day in the life* shadowing program is to assist you with career exploration and decision making.

We'd like you to learn and/or develop the following from this experience:

- self-awareness and self-confidence;
- a career field of interest and determine if it is a good fit;
- Career Center resources for exploring careers;
- networking skills and make professional connections; and
- business correspondence and communication etiquette.

### **2020-21 Winter Break Time-Line**

November 1-30: Watch the required Orientation Session [video](#) and complete the required [follow-up form](#).

December 1: Sign up for a Sponsor

### **Steps for Identifying & Contacting Sponsor**

1. Go to <https://my.hamilton.edu/after/careercenter/hcn>, search for sponsors of interest 2. Identify your first choice of sponsor
3. Edit email template located on My Hamilton Connect
  - 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 web site, including their 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 with the student before the day of shadowing to have some preliminary introductions 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 caused you to be interested? 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... but check with your sponsor. (see "Business Casual" description in appendices)
6. Know how to get there!

## 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 your shadowing to a different day – including March break or even summer. If your sponsor cancels on you – 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 as you would like to be called.
- Engage/Be attentive and respectful
- Ask for first and last names and email addresses (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 a meeting (with other staff, clients, board members, etc.);
- meeting/speaking with a colleague in the same or a different department
- listening to phone conversation(s)
- observation of your sponsor in his/her workplace as they engage in typical activities · an opportunity to ask questions about your sponsor's career field and/or position. *Note: this may be informal/throughout the day or a set time for you to conduct an Informational interview (Define: a meeting in which a person (you!) asks for career information and advice rather than employment. It is used to gather information on a field, find employment leads, and expand one's professional network. YOU ask the questions.*

## 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" on SurveyMonkey (it is our only way of knowing 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. Email template for developing your own customized shadowing experience C.

Student Preparation Work-sheet

D. Sample thank-you email/note to sponsor(s)

E. A Student's Guide to Attire

F. Sample questions

G. Criteria for Travel Stipend

### *Email template introducing yourself to sponsor*

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

Thank you for being a sponsor for the *SnapShot: a virtual day in the life* 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 what day would be most convenient for you to have me shadow you and what time I should arrive. 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>

SUBJECT LINE: Hamilton Student Requests Job Shadowing

Dear <Mr./Ms.> <Last name>,

I am a <sophomore/junior> at Hamilton and live in the <home city> area. Because of my interest in learning more about <career area>, I signed up to participate in Hamilton's job shadowing program with alumni and parents during Winter Break. Unfortunately, I was unable to locate a shadow sponsor who works in this area.

Through Hamilton's Career Center I learned that you work <at/in/as a> <company/career field/ occupation> in the <home city> area and I am writing to ask whether you would be willing to allow me to shadow you at your place of work for a single day during our Winter break, December 17<sup>th</sup> – January 18<sup>th</sup>? As you likely already know, shadowing activities might include: · attending staff or client meeting and/or having the student listen in

on phone conversation(s); · engaging student in a mini-project;

· a tour of your workplace;

· a one-on-one meeting to offer career advice, to provide feedback on the student's resume, and/or to suggest resources (books, web sites, professional contacts) for further career exploration; · introducing the student to a colleague in the same or a different department and/or arranging for the student to spend some time with that colleague.

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

I greatly appreciate your consideration and can be reached at <email address> or <cell phone #>.

Complimentary closing, (e.g., Sincerely, Regards)

First Name Last Name Class Year (e.g. '19)

## Student Preparation Work-sheet

To ensure that you maximize the benefit to you in 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 own personal 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. Helpful resources include O\*Net ([www.onetonline.org/](http://www.onetonline.org/)) or Vault Guides ([access.vault.com/](http://access.vault.com/))

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 web site)

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 to 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]

## *A Student's Guide to Interview and Info Session Attire*

When to wear “business casual:”

If the invitation or publicity says to! Business casual is appropriate for most employer info sessions. If in doubt, call the Career Center.

When to wear “business dress:”

If the invitation or publicity says to! Business dress is appropriate for most interviews. If in doubt, call the Career Center.

You can also look at the employer’s web site to get a ‘feel’ for the atmosphere of their organization (dress or casual). It never hurts to slightly overdress; by dressing nicely, you pay a compliment to your host.

Business Casual:

Dark or khaki pants, neatly pressed, and a pressed long sleeve, buttoned shirt in a solid or conservatively striped fabric are safe for both men and women. Be sure to wear a leather belt and shoes (no athletic shoes, no flip-flops/ sandals, and leave baseball caps at home!)

Men: When in doubt, wear a tie. A jacket is normally not necessary. Dark dress socks or socks that match the color of your pants are a must (no athletic socks).

Women: If you choose to wear a skirt or dress, avoid extreme trends in hem lengths. Be sure the garment is not too short when you sit. Conservative undergarments are a must. Sweater sets are appropriate.

Business Dress:

Men: A conservative suit with a tie is a must. Be sure to wear dark dress socks and polished shoes. Long-sleeve dress shirts (neutral colors) are good. A briefcase or portfolio is appropriate; a backpack is not.

Women: A conservative suit (or blazer with matching skirt or pants) is a must. Wear hose and polished shoes. A small, conservative purse that coordinates with your shoes is appropriate, or you may carry a simple briefcase or portfolio.

For all occasions:

Everything should be clean, well pressed, and show no wear. Wear cologne sparingly or not at all. Your hair should be clean and neatly styled. Keep make-up and jewelry conservative and minimal. Facial hair should be immaculately groomed or clean-shaven. NOTE: It is very important to be comfortable in what you wear – don’t get clothes that are too tight or that otherwise cause you to be uncomfortable.

*Sample Questions...*  
*to ask the various professionals 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 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?