

# Job Shadow Program

## Guidelines for Students 2025-26

Congratulations on being matched with a Purposeful Work Job Shadow! We hope that this job shadow opportunity offers you the chance to engage in career exploration, reflect upon your potential pathways, and build your network of Bates alumni and parents.

- **Our request:** Please review the guidelines in this document before you embark on your shadow to ensure you are following the recommended job shadow planning process.
- **Please Note:** If you were matched with more than one job shadow, you are expected to complete all of them. If you expect this to be a significant challenge, please email us soon.
- **Important! Email the date(s) you have established for each job shadow, including the sponsor's organization name, by January 23, 2026 to [jobshadow@bates.edu](mailto:jobshadow@bates.edu).**

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## HOW TO ARRANGE YOUR JOB SHADOW

### Receive the Introductory Email:

- As a first step, you will receive an email sent by [jobshadow@bates.edu](mailto:jobshadow@bates.edu) introducing you and your sponsor(s) to each other.
- In the introductory email you will receive the name of the shadow sponsor, their contact information, and any updates about the format, location, and circumstances of the shadow.
- If your shadow is considered a "group" shadow there will be other students included in that email as well.

### Coordinate with your Sponsor:

- After receiving the introductory email from [jobshadow@bates.edu](mailto:jobshadow@bates.edu), **your sponsor will contact you directly** (and other students, if applicable) to begin coordinating the job shadow plan.
- Follow the sponsor's lead in terms of next steps; respond to them in a timely manner and answer their questions; discuss dates, format, location and other important details for the job shadow.
- In addition to answering their questions, include a brief introduction about yourself. You might mention your class year, major, and other experiences that you've had. Please note that in most cases, the sponsors have not read your application materials.
- We recommend using email as the first communication method, however your sponsor may suggest a phone conversation, a brief zoom meeting, or even send links to scheduling software or google forms to help organize the shadow. Please be flexible; follow their prompts and remain communicative.
- **Contact us at [jobshadow@bates.edu](mailto:jobshadow@bates.edu) if you have not heard from your sponsor for a significant period of time (three+ weeks). We can assist in making the connection with your sponsor.**

### Consider your Job Shadow Format:

- Your shadow format will determine many of the next steps required to arrange your shadow.
- Take note of format in the introductory email; **some job shadow formats may have changed since they were advertised on Handshake.**
- Review the appropriate format description(s) below pertaining to your shadow(s). If your shadow format is “flexible” please consider both in-person and virtual details in order to help you and your sponsor determine which option would be most appropriate.

In-Person	Virtual	Flexible
<b>Identify potential dates.</b>	<b>Identify potential dates.</b>	<b>Identify potential dates.</b>
<b>Identify potential <u>timeframes</u>:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most in-person shadows are one full day, during the organization’s typical business hours, such as 8am-5pm.</li> <li>Attending the shadow may require travel the day before and after.</li> <li>Choose a date when you have several days available to travel and complete the shadow.</li> </ul>	<b>Identify potential <u>timeframes</u>:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most virtual shadows are two hours, but can be longer and split into various dates/times.</li> <li>Shadow hosts may plan a series of virtual meetings on different dates.</li> <li>Shadow hosts may plan individual sessions in addition to group meetings.</li> </ul>	<b>Identify potential <u>timeframes</u>:</b>  <i>See the virtual and in-person description for considerations.</i>
<b><u>Consider your travel plans soon.</u></b> If the shadow is <b>local</b> to your home or campus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will you drive yourself?</li> <li>Carpool with other students?</li> <li>Use campus transportation?</li> <li>Does Uber/Taxi go to that location?</li> <li>Will you use the same method to return at the end of the shadow? Will it be available? Do you need to schedule a return trip?</li> </ul> If the shadow is <b>in another state</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When should you arrive and depart (night before? the day after?)</li> <li>Can you get yourself there in a car or carpool?</li> <li>Will you need to fly/bus/train?</li> </ul> <b>IMPORTANT: If you are on Financial Aid at Bates, we will support the transportation expenses for your <i>in-person</i> format shadows, but not the cost of overnight accommodations. If you are on Financial Aid, you’ll receive an email from us with more details soon.</b>	<b><u>Decide on the technical process for the virtual shadow.</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will the shadow take place on Zoom, Google Meet, another video conference option?</li> <li>Who will create the zoom links and invites?</li> <li>Is there any prep work that needs to be done in advance?</li> <li>If it is a group shadow, coordinate with the other students to plan introductions and questions.</li> <li>Will there be a phone conversation before or after the video conference?</li> </ul>	<b>Identify the <u>best format</u> for your shadow.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you live near the shadow or have plans to be in the region?</li> <li>Do you have time to travel to the shadow location?</li> <li>Does the sponsor have a preference for the format of the shadow?</li> <li>Travel funds are <u>not</u> available for “flexible shadows” that end up in-person, so please opt for a virtual shadow if the cost of travel is prohibitive.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Plan overnight accommodations</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you have a place to stay nearby with family or friends?</li> <li>Did the Shadow sponsor offer to host students in their home? (see intro email).</li> <li>You are not obligated to stay in their home, so please ask questions to explore if this is a good fit for you.</li> </ul>		

## On-Campus Format:

### On-Campus

#### Identify potential dates.

- Shadow hosts may have specific dates in mind when they plan to be on campus or they may want to poll the students for best days and times. Please remain flexible and communicative.

#### Identify potential timeframes:

- Most on-campus shadows are one to three hours, but may last longer and/or may be split into multiple dates/times.
- Shadow hosts may plan individual sessions in addition to group meetings while on campus.

#### Identify the best location for your shadow:

- Purposeful Work Staff can help sponsors arrange room reservations on campus.

## PREPARE

***Once the shadow date, time, and location are set, be sure to explore additional details.***

- Understand the duration of the job shadow and how long you are expected to be there.
- Will there be times set aside for meals? Some sponsors may have offered to host meals during in-person shadows, but they are not expected to plan or provide for your meals during your entire visit.
- Ask the sponsor to recommend attire so that you can dress appropriately for the work environment, even if the shadow is virtual.
- Discuss particular areas of interest that you would like to learn about or observe during your shadow.
- Are there any required forms such as confidentiality agreement, non-disclosure agreements, proof of vaccinations or background checks that you need to complete in advance?
- Please be flexible and keep in mind that your sponsor may have a very busy schedule and several other elements to coordinate during the planning process.
- ***Important! Email your shadow date and sponsor's name by January 23 to: [jobshadow@bates.edu](mailto:jobshadow@bates.edu)***

## RESEARCH

***Learn as much as possible about your sponsor's specific role and career field in order to craft specific and well-informed questions to ask during the job shadow:***

- Conduct research on your sponsor's role and employer
- Review the organization's website
- Review your sponsor's LinkedIn profile and the LinkedIn company page
- Search [Vault](#) (accessible through *Handshake*) and ONET ([onetonline.org](http://onetonline.org)) for information on occupations and industries
- Compile a list of key questions based on your research, your interests, and your curiosities
- Review [Networking: Making Professional Connections Guide](#) (found on the Purposeful Work web site and in *Handshake*) for sample questions to ask your sponsor
- ***Important! Consider how you will express appreciation for the sponsor's time after the shadow.***

## DAY OF THE JOB SHADOW

***Be prepared:***

- Be prepared to articulate your interests, questions, and what you hope to learn from the shadow.
- Have a system in place to take notes. Record names of any contacts you meet during the experience.
- Have an electronic version of your resume ready to email, if requested. (Remember, most sponsors have NOT reviewed your application materials).

***Be an active learner:***

- Take the initiative — ask questions and demonstrate active listening skills.
- Express an interest in meeting with other people who have similar jobs within the organization, as well as with people working at different levels.
- Observe the personalities of the people, the work tasks, and the culture within the workplace.
- Ask questions about the skills and qualities needed for someone to be successful in this type of work.

***Be professional and tactful:***

- Exhibit professional behavior; dress in appropriate work attire (ask your sponsor what is appropriate). Put your phone away and switch the ringer to silent.
- Proceed tactfully if the topic of internship/job opportunities comes up; a sponsor may react negatively if your focus appears to be more about getting a job or internship, rather than exploring career paths.
- If you discover during the job shadow that you are no longer interested in your sponsor's work or chosen field, try to remain polite and engaged. In career exploration, there is value in learning what does not appeal to you! If this is the case, visit Purposeful Work to reflect on this realization.

***Be considerate and flexible:***

- Be on time; allow extra time for travel, parking, and any surprises, including technical issues.
- Be present; do not text, email or do other things on your phone or computer during your shadow.
- Please be aware that due to work demands, your sponsor may need to adjust the original plan.
- If plans for the day stray from the original plan, go with the flow!
- **Important!** Take a photo/screenshot of you and your sponsor; send it to [jobshadow@bates.edu](mailto:jobshadow@bates.edu).

## **AFTER THE JOB SHADOW**

***Send your sponsor a thank you note:***

- **Important!** Send a thoughtful thank you note within a week after your job shadow to your sponsor.
- If you met other Bates alumni or professionals during the shadow, send them notes as well.
- Use your best judgment to decide if a handwritten note or email message is appropriate; this may vary, depending on the sponsor and/or the organization.

***Consider sending a small gift to your sponsor:***

- This is not required, but something to consider; do not spend a lot of money on a gift.
- Something with a Bates logo or image is always meaningful; remember it's the thought that counts.
- The Center for Purposeful Work has a small stash of gift items to share; inquire if interested.

***Complete the post-shadow reflection:***

- We will email a brief online survey so that you can evaluate and reflect upon your experience; your feedback is vital and will help us to plan the program for next year.

***Share your experience:***

- Please send photos from your experience to [jobshadow@bates.edu](mailto:jobshadow@bates.edu).

***Reflect on how your job shadow experience may impact your academic and career plans:***

- What did you learn? How did the experience affirm your interests? What does this learning suggest that you do or learn next? What new questions do you have about potential career paths?
- Consider further academic, extracurricular, and experiential learning opportunities.
- Keep in touch with your sponsor by connecting on LinkedIn and periodically sending emails.
- Identify other individuals in your fields of interest to contact for informational interviews or self-designed job shadows.
- Meet with a Purposeful Work advisor to discuss your experience and plan next steps.

**Best wishes for a wonderful job shadow experience!**

**If you have any questions or problems along the way, please feel free to contact us:**

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