



Job shadowing for new starters

1. What is job shadowing?

1.1. Job shadowing is a process whereby a member of staff spends an agreed amount of time with another member of staff to observe their work. It may be included within an induction programme where it is felt that it would be beneficial for a new starter to:

- spend time with a member of staff undertaking the same role or some of the same tasks as the new starter; and/or
- find out more about work undertaken with a different area to increase their understanding of an area of work or role to help their development within their role.

2. Benefits of job shadowing

2.1. Job shadowing has a number of potential benefits for the individuals involved, as well as the department and wider University, by:

- giving a new starter the opportunity to learn new skills by observing them, and having the opportunity to ask questions;
- providing networking opportunities for the new starter and the staff member being shadowed;
- providing a development opportunity for the member of staff being shadowed, and the opportunity to reflect upon the tasks they undertake; and
- providing an opportunity for both the new starter and the staff member being shadowed to share knowledge and good practice.

3. Things to consider when organising or participating in a job shadowing exercise

Line manager

- How the shadowing exercise is relevant to the new starter's role.
- What benefits the new starter will gain from the shadowing exercise.
- How the shadowing will fit in with the new starter's workload and priorities.
- How long the shadowing exercise will last for – shadowing typically takes place from a minimum of a few hours to a maximum of one or two days.
- Whether the proposed area to be shadowed is suitable – the nature of the work being undertaken, health and safety, and confidentiality issues should all be taken into account.

- Whether training would be a better option where the new starter has specific skills needs.
- Whether the new starter would benefit from observing any specific tasks.
- What form the shadowing will take – will it be purely observational or will the person being shadowed provide an explanation of the tasks they are undertaking, and the opportunity for the new starter to practice tasks themselves.
- How the new starter will use the knowledge they obtain from the shadowing exercise.
- How the exercise will be evaluated, to ensure that the new starter is able to reflect on what they have learnt, and provide feedback to the line manager, to inform consideration of future shadowing opportunities.

The new starter (shadow)

- What do they hope to gain from the shadowing exercise?
- Whether there are any particular tasks or work areas which they would benefit most from observing.
- How will they record what they learn from the shadowing exercise?
- How they will maximise the benefits gained from the exercise e.g. by sharing information with other members of their team or department if appropriate.
- How they will evaluate how useful the shadowing exercise was.

The member of staff being shadowed (host)

- How they will establish what the new starter intends to obtain from the exercise.
- How they will establish and accommodate the new starter's preferred learning style.
- The timings of the shadowing exercise and how this relates to the host's planned activities and the areas the shadow would like to focus on.
- How they will consider and address health and safety and confidentiality issues.
- Where the new starter will sit during the shadowing exercise.
- How they will brief colleagues in advance about the shadowing exercise.
- How they will check the new starter's understanding and give them the opportunity to ask questions.
- How they will evaluate the shadowing experience, and what they gained from it.