

Executive summary

In a series of focus groups carried out in 2012, feedback from students indicated that they lacked insights into the professions that they were studying towards. As the SBS Employability Hub's aim is to help students stand out when they graduate, they decided an initiative needed to be implemented to help students gain insights into the professional world. This led to the concept of work shadowing being introduced. Work shadowing is a developmental activity that involves a student visiting someone in a specific role, business area or organisation and spending time with this individual/team. The sessions will be short (lasting no longer than 4 hours) and will provide insight into a variety of different sectors reflecting courses provided by SBS such as Marketing, HR and Events.

In order to assess whether the scheme will be well received and utilised by students, SBS were awarded a bursary from ASET to fund an intern to evaluate the pilot. This research explored the concept of SBS taking the lead and implementing the new scheme in semester 1 academic year 2014/15. Pilot sessions were organised both internal to SHU and at external organisations. All parties involved were then contacted for feedback which was then analysed to assess whether the launch of the scheme would be successful. The overall research aim for Sheffield Business School is;

- Assess whether SBS should launch the Work Shadowing scheme for academic year 2014/15 by piloting internal and external sessions during Summer 2014

Three research collection methods were used to gather the data and consisted of collection of secondary data to analyse SBS competitors, a focus group and interviews in order to identify current and future attitudes and perceptions of those who would be involved in work shadowing activities. After in-depth analysis into the research, the following key findings were identified;

- students (studying at all levels) were interested and keen to take part in the scheme, but the benefits need to be emphasised when promoting
- participating in the scheme is positive and beneficial for all parties involved (including host organisations and careers advisers)
- insights into job specific roles and sectors were gained (achieving the core aim of the scheme) as well as practical CV enhancing experiences

After cross examining findings from the three research methods and identifying key trends that were consistent through the research, a series of recommendations were created;

- Emphasise professional experience gained as well as skill enhancement
- Promote the scheme using relevant mediums for users
- Emphasise benefits of what can be gained in a short session
- Link sessions to placement support/applications

Overall, despite potential implication issues that could affect the success of these recommendations (factors such as resource implications) it is highly suggested that Sheffield Business School look to gain competitive advantage by implementing them into the process and promotion of the new work shadowing scheme.

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Introduction

Sheffield Business School (SBS) is one of four faculties that make up Sheffield Hallam University. Within this faculty, a variety of business, tourism and hospitality related undergraduate, post graduate and part time degrees are available for students at any stage of their career. The faculty has seen the introduction of a new team - The Employability Hub. This team is responsible for providing a holistic employability offer to students and external organisations. It is an integral part of enhancing student experience and employability within SBS along with the delivery of the SBS employer engagement strategy. Currently, the Hub supports a variety of schemes to enhance student employability. These include student internships, industry guest speakers, student societies and courses such as the Common Purpose Leadership Award. The proposed work shadowing scheme aims to be an additional initiative that will add to this portfolio of employability activity within SBS.

The Employability Hub introduced the work shadowing scheme pilot during semester two 2014. The scheme aimed to facilitate work shadowing opportunities between SBS students and business professionals from external organisations and internal SHU departments. In collaboration with the SBS Employment Advisers and the University Careers and Employment Service the scheme targeted students from levels 4, 5 and 7 with no (or minimal) work experience and international students with no (or minimal) experience of working in the UK.

The launch of the scheme will directly link to Sheffield Hallam University's 2020 Strategy to 'Expand Horizons'. This strategy focuses on equipping students to realise their full potential by opening up opportunities, raising aspirations and supporting success by using Hallam's strong national and global partnerships in a variety of different activities

Background to the SBS Work Shadowing Scheme

In a series of focus groups carried out in 2012, feedback from students indicated that they lacked insights into the professions that they were studying towards. This was due to factors such as commitment to part time work and financial restraints, preventing them from gaining valuable course related work experience.

Students were demanding to gain experience in the business world (whether this be by completing consultancy projects, internships or other projects offered by the University). However, in the case of competitive internship

opportunities, the successful students tended to have relevant work experience and skills for the opportunities available. This led to the question - how can these unexperienced students improve the quality of their applications to succeed in these roles? This was supported by the finding that students didn't know what they wanted to do as they had never experienced professional work in their area of study (e.g. Marketing manager). This led to the exploration of a work shadowing scheme as an additional initiative in the portfolio of employability activity.

The core aims of the shadowing scheme are as follows

- to provide students with insights into specific roles and industry sectors
- to engage with businesses in a different way
- to widen the overall employability portfolio of employment initiatives
- improve student motivation

These aims will need to be at the core of all communications and activity related to work shadowing. These aims also link to measuring the success of work shadowing sessions. The measure of success of the shadowing scheme isn't necessarily the volume of students undertaking shadowing - but the quality of experience and further relationships the students gain from taking part.

Evaluation Aims

In 2014, the SBS Employability Hub was awarded a bursary from ASET to fund a student internship from May to September. The ASET Exploration and Enhancement Student Bursary funded a student to carry out an evaluation of the pilot work shadowing scheme. The research conducted assessed whether introducing the scheme was beneficial to students and employers alike. The research aims for the project are as follows;

- Assess whether SBS should launch the Work Shadowing scheme for academic year 2014/15 by piloting internal and external sessions during Summer 2014
- Gather insightful data into whether implementing the work shadowing scheme would be beneficial to both SBS students and employers
- Consider the process for arranging Work Shadowing sessions
- Discover potential effective marketing methods for the scheme - identify what employers & students want to hear and effective communication methods

If the research finds that the scheme will be beneficial for students and successful for SBS, the school will incorporate work shadowing into its employability offer and launch the scheme at the beginning of the 2014/15 academic year.

What is work shadowing?

Work shadowing is a developmental activity that involves a student visiting someone in a specific role, business area or organisation and spending time with this individual/team. Participating students from the subject areas below will be matched to a host employer for a short, defined period of work shadowing (perhaps 2-3 hours). At Sheffield Business School, the subject areas for work shadowing include;

- Business Management / Strategic Management / International Business / Marketing / Organisational Behaviour and Human Resource Management / Languages / Facilities Management
- Business Operations and Systems / Finance and Banking / Financial Accounting and Management Accounting
- Hospitality / Events Management / Tourism / Food

The timing and time period will depend on the type of shadowing, the purpose, the diversity of the role, resource requirements, business needs and any local principles that host organisations may have regarding time constraints. Ultimately, it's up to the host organisation how they wish to plan the visit and have opportunity to use a variety of methods including;

Observation

This simply means that the student will spend a set period of time observing the host employer in their daily routines, meetings and activities. Time should be set aside in between activities for discussion and debriefing. This is fairly straightforward to plan but should be explained to anyone involved during that period.

Activities

The student could be invited to attend any existing meetings, events or training activities or the host employer could arrange an activity to coincide with their visit. This is more focussed and less passive than observation, but can be beneficial for the whole teams with organisations and can be incorporated into existing team activities. For example,

- Employers could hold a 'show and tell' style activity and ask team members to give an overview of their current projects.
- Students could be sent off around the office / department to talk to staff about their role in the organisation.

There are a variety of perceived benefits for both host organisations and students, employers can gain the following from hosting a shadowing session. Below are the current benefits SBS propose to employers

- Talent spot potential interns or graduate recruits
- Gain cultural insights by seeing your product or service through a fresh pair of eyes
- Enhance your public profile whilst engaging with a local university
- Develop professional networks, stronger collaborative relationships and greater team-working

Overall, work shadowing is a scheme which has been used in business for many years and allows students to witness first hand a professional in practice in the area they wish to pursue their career. Experiencing a professional work environment is insightful for all involved in a short time period and is relatively cost free for both students and organisations alike.

Further benefits for students

In order to gain as much out of the experience as possible, it was decided that successful students must attend appointments with their relevant Employment Advisers. These sessions took place both before and after the proposed sessions and allowed for the students to prepare for the visit as they would a job interview. The sessions also allowed students to reflect on what they learnt from the experience and use it effectively their future CV and job applications. Also, as discussed further in this report, initiating a relationship between students and employment advisers will hopefully allow for students to continue utilising the services available in the future.

Reasons behind work shadowing

The Employability Hub has explored work shadowing as a scheme which will cater to those students who have little or no U.K work experience. As the Employability Hub's main focus is to help SBS students stand out when they graduate - the introduction of shadowing will be another opportunity for students to achieve this aim. The proposed scheme has a vast array of benefits for students including;

- learning more about a chosen career in a short space of time
- building up professional networks
- gaining first-hand advice from someone already working in the sector that interests the students
- gaining the chance to test their assumptions about the role or sector

Proposed process

Figure 1 demonstrates the step by step procedures that the Hub team will need to complete when organising a work shadowing session. This process has been implemented when organising the pilot sessions and has proved successful. However, the process has witnessed a few complications, the main being the relatively complex Health and Safety procedures that all parties need to adhere to. The table below demonstrates these procedures, who is responsible and the stage of process it needs to be completed.

Health and Safety Requirement	Session planning	Pre advertisement	After student selection
Hub			
Send out booking form	X		
Risk Assessment		X	
Send H&S agreement (Employer)			X
Send H&S agreement (Student)			X
Enrol successful student to BB quiz (Up to 24 hours)			X
Student			
Complete BB H&S quiz			X
Read H&S guidance notes			X
Provide emergency contact details			X
Employer			
Complete booking form	X		
Confirm guidance guidelines			X

As the table demonstrates, there are a variety of different aspects of Health and Safety that need to be completed. Due to the differing timescales it is essential that the individual organising the shadowing sessions allows for sufficient notice and flexibility for all parties included in this process (including authorisers, host organisations and target students).

This need for flexibility is also apparent in other stages of the overall shadowing process (e.g. how much notice would a member of the careers adviser's team require for an appointment in busier months?). If implemented fully into the overall employability initiative, these factors will have to be considered to ensure the process runs as smoothly as possible for everyone included.

Link letter	Main Activity	Sub-Activity	Actioned by	Details
A	Source host		LM	
A1		Check / register on Wyvern	FM	Via unmatched mentors (Linda Wilson in Careers), WWOS 14 campaign, normal business engagement activities, internal contacts
B	Develop work shadowing opportunity			
B1		Send host the employers guidance document	FM/ RK/ LM	The link to the details capture form is embedded in the text. There are choice of employer form - one with a link to google docs and one with a word table to capture the details. Either are fine, it depends on employer preference.
B2		Risk assessment	FM/ RK	Document in Work Shadowing File
C	Receive completed employer details			
C1		Create folder in Work shadowing by Client Name	JL/ LM	Save completed employer details to new folder
C2		Acknowledge receipt and confirm timescales	JL/ LM	Students should be given a 2 weeks to apply whenever possible
C3		Create opportunity advert using the template	JL/ LM	Information for students\Work shadowing guidance for students.docx
C4		Email relevant students via Blackboard & social media channels	JL/ LM	
C5		Email relevant course tutors if applicable	JL/ LM	
D	Receive applications			
D1		Acknowledge receipt	JL/ LM	Monitor number of applications and flag to FM/ RK if responses poor
D2				
E	Select student	Set up shortlisting matrix	JL/ LM	Priority should be given to levels 4,5 and 7 students with the best work experience in the UK
E1		Match student to WS opportunity	FM/ RK	
E2		Contact unsuccessful students	JL/ LM	
F	Work Shadowing preparation			
F1		Contact successful student	JL/ LM	Email in folder - includes 3 attachments (please see below)
F2		Book brief and de-brief appointments with appropriate EA for successful student	JL/ LM	Details of course specific advisors in WS Folder
F3		Enrol on Blackboard for H&S quiz	JL/ LM	
F4		Send completed guidance form to successful student	JL/ LM	Attachment 1
F5		Send H&S Guidance notes to successful student	JL/ LM	Attachment 2
F6		Confirm details to client and send H&S agreement	JL/ LM	Attachment 3
F7		Check EA appointment has gone ahead and book follow up appointment	JL/ LM	Copy saved in WS Folder
F8		Check student has returned completed Emergency Contact details	JL/ LM	
G	Follow up			
G1		Confirm de-briefing appointment with EA / student	JL/ LM	
G2		Send student feedback questionnaire (after appointment)	JL/ LM	For the purpose of the evaluation of the pilot Lucy will contact both the student and the host to arrange telephone / face to face and possibly videoed interviews
G3		Send client feedback questionnaire	JL/ LM	

evaluation into whether work shadowing should become a permanent scheme to offer SBS students

As well as the WWOS campaign, other business engagement activities, Central careers links and other internal contacts have been utilised to source possible shadowing opportunities. Initial feedback from those contacted regarding shadowing was relatively positive with organisations from a variety of sectors registering interest in hosting a session. However, once leads were followed up in order to make further arrangements for a session it was found that due to various factors, they were no longer able to participate. These included;

Business lead not being the decision maker

Individuals contacted by the campaigns that were run by SBS (e.g. Alumni) are not always in a position at their organisation to make such an operational decision. Therefore, once the initial conversation with a business lead had taken place, information was then cascaded to other departments and management levels requiring frequent chase up calls/emails by the Hub team - something which isn't always appreciated by either the contact organisation or by the SBS staff member.

Work shadowing format being unsuitable

For a number of contacts approached, it was found that due to the confidential nature of their role or for practical reasons, work shadowing wasn't a suitable way of working with our students. It was found that jobs including sensitive information such as human resources would be difficult to shadow due to the confidentiality linked to such a role. This led to the exploration of a different concept of shadowing - industry insights. This would involve a student (group of students) having an extended meeting with the hosts and listen to what their role involves - rather than simply watch them. Also, some individual's roles involved them travelling frequently and they were simply were not in the office enough for a student to come into their business premises.

Other factors that affected the availability of shadowing hosts included time restraints in organisations, busy periods/seasons and health and safety factors. However, with the right administrative support and business relationships - sourcing shadowing hosts would not be a particularly difficult task for the Employability Hub team.

Pilot Shadowing Sessions

In order to test the concept of work shadowing at SBS and whether employers/student would benefit from such activity, 3 pilot sessions were arranged between May - July 2014. As discussed above, sourcing shadowing hosts proved more difficult than expected, therefore, a mixture of external organisations as well as internal SHU departments were contacted and sessions arranged. Further detail into these shadowing sessions, what they entailed and how they were arranged can be found below;

KingKraft Ltd

Kingkraft is a family run enterprising company in Sheffield. They have over 29 years' experience designing and manufacturing equipment which helps to maintain the independence of people with varying degrees of mobility. The company is owned and managed by a team of engineers and physiotherapists and is a recognised specialist in the field of bathing, moving and handling and seating/sensory integration. Kingkraft were keen to keep close links with universities - particularly Sheffield Hallam and after discussions with SBS it was decided that work shadowing would be the simplest way of doing that. Contact with the company was initiated by Felicity Mendoza - Research Associate within the Employability Hub who has an ongoing relationship with Kingkraft. After a series of conversations, a half day work shadowing session was agreed and advertised to students using a Google App. Four students applied and the most suitable student was selected for the session. The student - who was studying Business Studies (level 4) - was introduced to a variety of different aspects of running a business including Marketing, Finance and Operations.

Sheffield Hallam University - Central Events

Sheffield Hallam University are responsible for organising and hosting a variety of internal and external events. The University's Conference Officer is responsible for organising large conferences across the University. Most recently she was in charge of the organisation 10th biennial Conference of the International Sports Engineering Association hosted at SHU. When approached regarding the shadowing scheme, the Conference Officer was very keen to take part due to her previous shadowing experience of staff members and her overall interest in working with Hallam students - something she wishes to pursue further. The ASET Intern for the project - Lucy Macbeth - had previously shadowed the Conference Officer on a similar conference which led to contact with internal events team to be initiated. The student selected to participate in the work shadowing session was a level 4 Events

Management student who had particular interest in the conference element of event management. She was invited to shadow the Conference Officer in her role and on the registration desk on the day of the conference and gain detailed insights into what is required to organise such an event. It also allowed for the student to gain a fuller understanding into background/planning goes into large event planning and what responsibilities/challenges event organisers can face. The student was also given opportunity to ask questions and learn about the different roles within the large and diverse events team at Sheffield Hallam University.

Sheffield Hallam University - Human Resources Directorate

The final pilot session to take place was also held at Sheffield Hallam University on July 30th 2014. The Human Resources Directorate at Sheffield Hallam is committed to supporting the recruitment, retention, reward and development of all its employees. The University also provides strategic HR expertise for external businesses from a variety of sectors. The department offered a half day shadowing/industry insight session where the successful students were allowed / able to learn and understand what a typical day of a HR professional is like. This session was slightly different to the other sessions in the pilot due to the confidential nature of a HR professional's role. The Head of Department arranged for the successful students to spend some time with a few different people within the Directorate to understand a bit more about each of their roles. This session was again internally sourced as part of the pilot scheme - with the HR contacts being really keen to get involved with the scheme and host a session. This session accommodated two students (in contrast to the other pilot sessions). The successful candidates were international students who are studying for their masters in International Human Resource Management.

Student Application Process

For each pilot session, the same application process was used to find a suitable student (a step by step guide of this process can be found as part of Figure 1). Essentially, the sessions were open to all students on the universities Blackboard site. This site is used regularly by students at all levels of their degree. Information was sent in an announcement format (example can be found in Appendix 1) and emails were sent to those who were on courses related to the sessions available. Using a combination of mass and targeted marketing allowed for maximum student awareness, with an added emphasis sent to those who would benefit most from shadowing opportunity. The process included students filling out an online Google docs form which

was monitored by a member of the Hub team. (However, when multiple sessions are being advertised, different forms need to be created). The students were then shortlisted using the following criteria;

- Little or no U.K work experience
- Level 4, 5 or 7 student
- Understanding of how shadowing can benefit them

The successful student is then contacted (the unsuccessful students also need to be contacted) and subsequent communication and documents including the Health and Safety procedures are then completed. For the pilot sessions, this promotional method was sufficient. The proposed future promotional content and methods regarding work shadowing are discussed further in this report.

Evaluation Project

The ASET intern's role was to evaluate a series of pilot shadowing sessions completed between May and July 2014. The research conducted will assist managers at SBS in the decision whether to fully implement work shadowing into SBS' employability portfolio. Below are the findings, analysis and recommendations of the research.

Methodology

As discussed previously, work shadowing is a new scheme by SBS. Therefore, in order to gain competitive advantage against other universities and ensure the scheme is what SBS students are demanding - a series of primary and secondary market research was conducted. This combination of primary and secondary data allows for a strong, detailed analysis into both students and employers views, opinions and feelings towards work shadowing. After arranging three pilot work shadowing sessions both internal and external to the University, a variety of research collection methods were used including

- Telephone and face to face interviews with students who have completed/shown interest in work shadowing opportunities
- Interviews with host employers who have completed the pilot work shadowing sessions
- Secondary internet research into other Universities who offer similar work shadowing schemes
- focus group of recent graduates to gauge their opinions on the proposed scheme

This variety of research methods and sample of people has allowed for this research to be detailed, significant and most of all effective in order for SBS to gain insightful knowledge into their customers' expectations.

Secondary Research

In order to gain an understanding of what other U.K universities are already proposing in terms of work shadowing, secondary research was completed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of these other shadowing schemes and what features SBS could use in their proposed scheme. Internet based research found that a variety of universities across the U.K currently encourage students to take part in work shadowing schemes across a variety

of different business areas depending on the specialisms that each university provide. These institutions include;

- Loughborough University
- Newcastle University
- University of Chester
- University of Liverpool

A key similarity amongst the schemes available at these universities is that the format, objectives and experience that students gain from work shadowing is very similar whereby;

- Sessions are short (averaging around 4 hours a session)
- The students participating do not undertake any form of task/work, they observe, listen and ask questions to gain as much knowledge about the role as possible
- Focus on building networks
- Skill development (e.g. customer service, communication, professional and commercial awareness)
- Provide insight into chosen career sector

However, each University has slightly different ways of communicating and promoting these work shadowing schemes to their students. There are different target audiences, promotional methods and student and employer incentives for getting involved with work shadowing. Below is a table which compares these different shadowing processes and analysis of these differing elements, their strengths and weaknesses and what SBS could do to effectively implement their work shadowing communications and to generate as much interest and successful shadowing sessions as possible.

Loughborough University	All undergraduate students	Central Careers Service	Loughborough University website - available	2014 sessions = February - May	Over 150 placements in 2012 across all subject areas of the University, 50 employers hosted	Students complete shadowing interest form	
Newcastle University	All students who wish to gain work experience (Work Shadowing)	Careers Service	Mainly the Newcastle University website.	All year	Students source their own opportunities with application support from staff. Experience all different subject areas.	Students are encouraged to source their own shadowing opportunities	
	Passport to work (International students)		'Insight day' promotional angle, 'Passport to Work' angle for different scheme				Passport to work positions are available online
	International students who want UK work experience		The Careers and Employability service				Internal UoL departments signing in issues)
University of Liverpool	International students who want UK work experience	The Careers and Employability service	UoL Website and social media pages	Throughout semesters 1 & 2	Internal UoL departments	Students book onto available session which are available on the careers site (unable to go further due to signing in issues)	
University of Chester	All students	The University of Chester Careers and Employment Services	Website (most effective content)	24th September - 31st May	Over 150 sessions are on the database for students to choose from - across a variety of different sectors	Students sign up to shadowing 'bank'. Employers sign up to host student. The students then chose session and liaise with careers to find appropriate date for all parties	
		Services					

Who is Eligible for work shadowing?

At Loughborough University and the University of Chester, shadowing sessions are available to all undergraduate students across a variety of different departments including the arts and politics. The same is apparent at Newcastle whereby students at all levels are encouraged source their own work shadowing sessions with support from the careers team. Newcastle also has a separate scheme of 'Passport to Work' which is for students who have little U.K work experience. This is similar to Liverpool's work shadowing scheme as when researching the University of Liverpool it was found that the entire scheme is focussed on the International students who are struggling to get U.K work experience and wish to practice their English conversation.

Approaches to Work Shadowing

Newcastle University's Passport to Work scheme is very similar to the scheme proposed by SBS. Its' ultimate aim is to provide students who have little or no work experience with essential skills and examples to put on their CV's. They are the only University to also have two separate shadowing schemes with the other being focussed on supporting student's source their own sessions as well as the Passport to Work scheme. However, this scheme is slightly different to the proposed scheme at SBS as the level of the role is that students would be shadowing will be a more customer service/communication based roles rather than professional development.

Liverpool University's approach to shadowing also shares elements with the proposed SBS scheme offering available sessions on their website with these sessions being internally based (again something which SBS are looking to implement).

Finally, it was found that all shadowing marketing materials have a strong link to the universities main careers services - until the SBS scheme. However, the proposed work shadowing scheme at SBS is the only one that is entirely faculty based.. This focussed approach to promoting work shadowing will need to be closely analysed to see if it is the most effective way of promoting work shadowing opportunities.

Marketing/Promotion of Work Shadowing

Loughborough launched their work shadowing scheme in February 2014 and link it the Loughborough University Employability Award (Loughborough University, 2014). The specific content on the Loughborough website is limited (however, this may encourage further click through activity on the page). However, they do have a dedicated page on their site with links available to find out more about the scheme - linking the scheme to the overall

Employability Award is a key promotional strength for Loughborough. This may also be due to the way that Loughborough students gather information - is the website the main port of call for information? At Liverpool, opportunities to shadow include Front of House, Bar and Retail roles whereas SBS propose to have higher level managers in degree specific roles such as Human Resources and Marketing. The Passport to Work pages of the University of Liverpool's website are much more interactive and detailed compared to the Work Shadowing pages, both however contain links to further information. Overall, the University of Chester's website has a range of different documents for shadowing including feedback questionnaires, application forms and advice for students to potentially organise their own shadowing experience. The University of Chester's website is the most effective of the four studied. An interesting factor that was found when researching the shadowing scheme at Chester is that the main website page containing information regarding the scheme is aimed at potential host organisations and how shadowing will benefit them - as well as a student focus. This allowed for Chester to effectively target their two key markets using one effective medium of their corporate website.

Overall, the secondary research, based on publicly available information, suggests that work shadowing schemes at other universities are being well received and there's a high level of student interest in such schemes. This is evident across all the universities researched with a variety of feedback from students including both written and recorded testimonials from students and host employers. Recommendations from this secondary research can be found later on in this report.

Primary Research

Feedback from students who applied but were unsuccessful

In order to find out what the students think about the work shadowing scheme and to ensure that communications regarding the scheme were reaching the target students, a series of face to face and telephone interviews were conducted. Three students who had applied for the scheme at Kingkraft Ltd were interviewed. The findings of the three interviews are as follows;

The first key finding was that shadowing sessions promoted/discussed initially in a 'Careers and Employability workshop' was effective as the students knew about the scheme and felt more inclined to read the follow up email and get involved. Email communication was again discussed with students suggesting

that there are better ways of promotion and stressed that some students don't check their university email as regularly as others. All respondents stated that having other careers service involvement with the scheme was also a positive element during the promotion, application and summary stages of the scheme.

Student expectations about what they would gain by completing a work shadowing session were coherent with the proposed outcomes. Students did not expect to gain any practical skills from the work shadowing session and were aware that they would not be completing any tasks/duties. The students suggested that they would simply learn more about a particular role, experience a professional environment and be able to use their experience in interviews and on their CV's. When asked about on the day activities- the expectations matched the proposed process/activities. Expectations included watching, asking questions and gaining an understanding of professional environment culture and how people work together- all of which the proposed sessions aim to include.

After being asked whether there were any improvements SBS could implement when launching the scheme the only suggestions were for the sessions to be better advertised in different formats. A key suggestion was for the University's library facilities to be utilised when promoting activities as this is where students spend a large amount of their time. Also, the range of opportunities needs to be varied and specific to certain courses as this will encourage students to get experience in their chosen sector.

Focus group of recent graduates and their views on shadowing

Purpose

To gain detailed qualitative opinions and insights into the proposed shadowing initiative a focus group of recent SBS graduates was conducted. The overall research aims of the focus group were to;

Identify students and recent graduate's attitudes towards the pilot work shadowing scheme at SBS

Enhance communication and promotion methods of Employability activity identifying the most popular and effective methods via running a focus group of current users.

There is a trend of focus groups being applied more in Public Sector companies (Folch-Lyon & Trost, 1981) . This ongoing trend is perfect for SBS and this project because the focus group will explore concepts of work

shadowing and whether students are interested and would actively get involved with such a scheme. It is the best way to get thorough detail into what the diverse population of SBS and Hallam students alike think and are happy to engage with.

Attendees

The participants included undergraduate students and recent graduates studying the following courses Events Management, Business Studies, Marketing Communications & Advertising, Business, Management and Hospitality. This variety of backgrounds allowed for insight into as many student views across the faculty as possible.

The respondents were SBS students who had just completed their degree at SBS. Overall, six students agreed to take part in the focus group held on the 11th May 2014. It was essential that these respondents had detailed knowledge and experience of studying Sheffield Business School as Vivienne Hollis argues that this first key characteristic of a successful focus group. (Hollis Vivien, 2002).

There were two male and four female respondents, all of who studied at the Business School as well as coming from different professional and personal backgrounds (e.g. the majority of the group had completed a Placement year during their studies). This allowed for a varied mixture of candidates in order to gain as much detail and concepts as possible.

Once the focus group had been arranged the following elements were also considered to ensure maximum quality results;

- **Questions and probes planned in advance to direct attention to the topic**
- **Discussion, or collective activity, planned to encourage spontaneous dynamic interaction between participants so as to explore ideas**

Twelve Work Shadowing focussed open ended questions were designed to be delivered to the focus group (Appendix 2). Further questions regarding other SBS employability activities such as Internships and Societies were also delivered to the group using key 'trigger' questions to encourage discussion which will answer further questions

Overall, the focus group lasted just under an hour and as Hollis states the 4th key element of a successful focus group is that the overall outcomes were 'ostensibly based on group responses and in some cases based on analyses

of the actual interactions. (Hollis Vivien, 2002) Highlights and analysis into the findings of the focus group can be found below.

Perceived Benefits	Perceived Disadvantages	Prior Experience
Prepares students for professional environments	Lack of responsibility	Events students undertake similar activity as part of studies
Great opportunity to see sector specific roles	Sessions are not long enough to gain CV enhancing experiences	Students who have undertaken placements have completed similar activity
Enhance application quality and interview techniques	Highly dependent on students preferred learning styles	Similar sessions available during other employability activities

Focus Group Findings

In order to initiate maximum discussion and give the focus groups some context. The discussion began with questions regarding how entering a professional environment differed from their expectations and whether they felt prepared to enter such an environment in the future. The entire group stated that they hadn't worked in an office environment before and they embarked on their first experience with an open mind yet with slight apprehension. Respondents also suggested that when they did they were slightly shocked about the environment as a whole. They suggested that prior office experience would have increased confidence and would allow them to feel slightly less daunted. Schemes that they had experienced when starting a new role were then discussed and involved activities such as 'buddying up' and spending time with different teams which allowed them to adapt quickly into their new role.

Following this, the Work Shadowing scheme was fully explained to group including what it entails and examples of sessions that had already taken place. Questions relating to the respondents prior knowledge to work shadowing were then put to the group. Feedback suggested that some of the respondents had taken part in 'shadowing' activities internally when they started at their host placement/graduate companies yet the length of these sessions were longer than the proposed sessions at SBS (some were as long as 2 weeks and different departments were shadowed). Discussion then led to initial thoughts about the SBS sessions. Key findings were that its' similar to work

experience that they completed in secondary school due to the lack of responsibility and meaningful tasks. Learning styles were also explored. Some of the group stated that they are more 'hands on' when learning so shadowing wouldn't benefit them however others said it would be interesting to gain insight and watching others is how they progress and learn. Another important factor that was the academic demands from particular SBS courses such as Work Based Learning. Shadowing wouldn't be beneficial for Events students as they already complete similar yet more demanding sessions as part of their studies. However, findings from this pilot found that for events students who are studying at lower level (e.g. level 4 or early level 5), shadowing allows for early insight into different areas of events. The idea of linking shadowing session to studies was a potential idea to get more students involved (further discussed in the recommendations section of this report).

Overall, shadowing was received positively, with respondents saying it's a great opportunity to see real life examples of what it's like to work in a specific sector. Shadowing would also prepare them for perhaps the more mundane days that they all experienced on placement or in graduate roles. They also said that completing a work shadowing session provides great examples for interviews and would encourage them to apply/help enhance applications for a placement year in level 5. However, all respondents said that just completing a few hours wasn't sufficient and they wouldn't gain a lot from such a short time - this point was stressed on many occasions throughout discussions. They also stated that shadowing needs to be relatively easy to apply for and ideally be degree specific. Finally, using the phrase 'work shadowing' wasn't well received and would put the respondents off applying for such a scheme. The demand for slight responsibility was also apparent (if applicable). Ultimately, these level 6 respondents stressed the point that a short afternoon/morning wasn't long enough to gain CV enhancing experience from a work shadowing session.

Overall, the focus group allowed for detailed insight into the attitudes towards the pilot Work Shadowing scheme at Sheffield Business School. It has also allowed for insight into promotion of employability activity within SBS (including work shadowing) that have not yet been explored by SBS to be identified. This research, alongside secondary competitor research, has allowed for a series of recommendations to be generated for Sheffield Business School (available in the recommendations section of this report).

Feedback from completed sessions (Student & Employer)

KingKraft

Overall, both parties agreed that the session was a positive experience and would both participate in similar activity again. Kingcraft's approach to the session was to demonstrate a 'standard day in the office' with little preparation being conducted before the session as they wanted it to be as realistic as possible. The successful student who completed the session was a level 4 Business Studies student at SBS. The session was particularly suitable for this student as she was able to shadow all areas of the business including marketing, production and finance - all areas which are covered in course content. The student also demonstrated interest in learning about how small businesses operate in her application and this was catered for during her visit. Finally, a key factor that was identified by the Director of KingKraft was that for employees at KingKraft - hosting a session boosted their morale as they felt they were contributing to a young person's development that had shown interest in their role. Therefore, the experience wasn't just beneficial for students - but also those at KingKraft.

Sheffield Hallam University - Central Events

Feedback from the session held at SHU with the Events team also proved positive, with an extra session being arranged for the student to experience the administrative side of events. The host employer chose a day of the conference when she was available to actually speak to the student and demonstrate valid events tasks. Inevitably some aspects of the event didn't run smoothly. However, due to the nature of the events, this experience was a great example of managing an event and really allowed for the aims of work shadowing to be achieved. Another key success from this particular session was the experience differing to the student's

'I applied because it's a great insight about a family run business and for only a couple of hours - it was worth it' - Student

'I think our staff like the fact that somebody was interested in what they did and felt they had contributed to a young person's development' - Host

'I had opportunities to network, ask questions and see what different opportunities there are within the events team at Sheffield Hallam University.' Student

'I wanted to have an insight into how other conferences are ran at unusual venues' Student

Work Shadowing Evaluation Project Report

initial expectations of event management - another great example that work shadowing aims to achieve. For this particular session, the student met with their employment adviser before and after the session (something which will be essential for sessions to take place). This was another successful element of the experience as a whole. Not only did it prepare the student for the session, it also enhanced her employability as a whole. Overall, both the student and host organisations enjoyed the work shadowing experience and would definitely be involved in the scheme again. The host suggested that working with students is something that all the events team at SHU are looking to explore and would benefit from.

Sheffield Hallam University - Human Resources Directorate

The final pilot session, in the HR Directorate, was overall another successful part of the pilot - providing some insightful feedback for the scheme. Again, both parties enjoyed the experience with the HR team echoing the Events team by stating they want to be more involved and support the student experience. Feedback also suggested that the directorate are always looking to work with students - whether this is by offering internships and placements and project management activities. This something that SBS and the Employability Hub need to keep a focus on. The only criticism of the scheme (stated by both the students and staff in the HR) is that the students were slightly confused when they were not directly shadowing the staff practicing their roles. Both HR and SBS understood that this was the case (due to confidentiality matters); however this wasn't fully communicated to the students taking part. This trend of communication has also become apparent in other sessions. Therefore, organisers at SBS need to ensure that all communications regarding the sessions and what they will entail are clear and concise. Despite

Benefits included ...'A fresh pair of eyes, a probing mind to make us look at our processes in a different way.'
Host

'It was a good opportunity for me for see how HR operatives carry out their day to day activities and also to find out the skills they require carrying out their task.' Student

'Due to the fact that I have no relevant work experience on HR I found it a good opportunity to get a deeper idea and meet with HR professionals.'
Student

'It was helpful meeting with an Employment Advisor before the session as she gave some extra tips and possible questions to ask.'
Student

'Yes - it was positive to meet two and talk to two very engaged students'
Host

this slight mishap, it was stressed on a number of occasions that the students made the most of the experience and again, meeting with an employment adviser proved extremely beneficial for the students. They found out about the variety of roles that can be undertaken in an HR department and what qualifications and experience people had gained to get to a certain level. Finally, further comments suggested that work shadowing sessions should be longer (with some suggesting a week). This comment is discussed further on in this report.

Improvements & Recommendations

Ultimately, work shadowing was greatly received with limited recommendations for improvement throughout all sessions held. The students who undertook the session suggested that hosting the sessions at more convenient times of year (as May/summer clashes with a lot of exams and limits availability of students) would be a great improvement (this links to other research conducted for this pilot). They also stated that the recommended questions and information in the guidance notes (see appendix 3) for shadowing need to be clearer and contain detailed information regarding their host organisation. Finally, the student who completed the Kingkraft session was unable to attend an appointment with a careers advisor before the visit - she suggested that this may have helped her understanding of the scheme and help her prepare for her visit but still feels she gained as much from it as possible. This point is reinforced by those students who did attend employment adviser appointments as they found that attending enhanced their experience of work shadowing further. Overall, the pilot sessions conducted at Kingkraft and SHU have led to the following suggestions;

- host sessions when student work load is relatively low (usually October-November and February - April months)
- appointments with careers advisors before and after work shadowing sessions are essential
- ensure all documentation for work shadowing is clear and understandable for all students studying at SBS
- ensure flexibility is apparent for both parties - get the best experience out of the short time as possible
- ensure all communications sent to students are as detailed as possible about their specific work shadowing session

SBS staff opinions

Employment adviser feedback

As discussed previously in this report, the work shadowing process requires both pre and post shadowing session appointments with the students' relevant Employment Adviser (within SBS). In order to gain viewpoints of all individuals involved with the process and whether work shadowing is seen as an activity that will enhance the overall employability of our students, an informal interview with one of the SBS Employment Advisers who had been involved in the pilot sessions was conducted.

When asked about her initial thoughts on the proposed work shadowing scheme it was found that she thought it would potentially be of limited value for the students. She questioned how the scheme would benefit students and their employability more than other work experience activities and assumed that the scheme would be similar to 'work experience' students took part in at high school. However, after being asked to support the pilot sessions and after meeting the student who completed a session, this viewpoint dramatically changed.

The adviser described the work shadowing scheme as a 'quality opportunity' and a great way to gain insight into businesses and suggested that it would be most appropriate for level 4 and 5 students. It was found that with the sessions being compulsory to complete as part of shadowing, it would be an excellent introduction into an ongoing relationship with an adviser throughout the student's university career. In terms of preparation, the advisers approached work shadowing the same way as any other activity - by getting into the mind-set of the host employer and preparing the student to match these expectations. The post session appointments were equally as successful and useful for students and allowed reflection on the following;

- increase in confidence and experience
- familiarisation with the world of work that they are studying to enter
- research into a specific job role - a process which students will need to develop for future jobs applications etc.

Overall, meeting with an employment adviser was beneficial for students taking part in the work shadowing scheme, not only to prepare for their arranged session, but also for their overall progression. The adviser stated that students who utilise the advice available tend to perform better overall academically and professionally. Therefore, this ongoing relationship with an adviser will allow for the students to make the most out of their time studying at Sheffield Hallam University.

Recommendations

Generally, respondents suggested they would be interested in taking part in a work shadowing scheme whilst studying at Sheffield Business School, but currently not overly excited about the scheme. Consequently, the focus group allowed for the following recommendations to be suggested improving interest and overall potential participation in the scheme if launched in 2014/15. As the focus group allowed for discussion of a variety of different topics, these recommendations have been categorised into the following;

- Improvements/changes when implementing the process
- Recommended content for promotional material
- Communication and promotional methods

Recommendations for process adaptations

Link sessions to placement support/applications

Discussions throughout the focus group reinforced the understanding that placements are a significant part of the student experience. The students suggested that they would complete a shadowing session in order to gain practical experience in a specific sector to see if they wished to complete a yearlong placement in such industry.

Propose sessions to be in less busy/stressful time periods for students

Research found that current shadowing sessions at universities take place throughout both semesters and tend to be in the months of October-December and then February- Early April. These periods are when students are less engrossed in studies and most likely to get involved with activities outside of studies. This is also a good time period to promote the scheme as a lot of promotions are around fresher's week/after Xmas.

Recommendations for promotional content

Emphasise professional experience gained as well as skill enhancement

As SBS are looking to arrange shadowing sessions with hosts from professions that students are studying, emphasis on this element of the scheme needs to be apparent in communications. SBS need to ensure that the added professional benefits as well as skill enhancement is being communicated to students. Successful features of other Universities' schemes (such as the reward scheme at Loughborough and the interactive application processes) need to be explored for the pilot SBS scheme to see if this will encourage involvement with work shadowing and employability activity as a whole.

Emphasise benefits of what can be gained in a short session

All respondents suggested that just simply shadowing/watching an individual for a short period of time (2-4 hours) wouldn't be beneficial for them and could potentially be wasted time for both students and employers alike. However, other findings from those who have completed shadowing suggest otherwise. Therefore, the benefits of completing such a short activity need to be promoted effectively in communications regarding work shadowing sessions. Students also suggested that they would be more likely to get involved if the sessions within the company were longer and perhaps more frequent (e.g. a day a week for a month). This suggestion would need to be explored further as it may clash with other employability activities ran by SBS including internships and student projects.

Change 'Work Shadowing' campaign title/theme

As discussed above, the term 'Work Shadowing' wasn't well received by the respondents and it was said it would discourage them from applying for such a scheme. Alternative concepts explored included 'A day in the life of' and 'Industry Experience Visits'. These ideas were better received with students saying it would suggest a real in depth look into what professionals face within their given sector - rather than just 'watching' and shadowing what they do. The advantage of the name change also became apparent after discussions into piloting the scheme with professionals with different business areas (e.g. Human Resources). These individuals were really keen to get involved and share knowledge with students yet they would be unable to let a student 'shadow' due to confidentiality reasons. Before implementing this recommendation, further market testing into this new concept needs to be conducted in order to ensure it will be effective for all SBS Students and potential host organisations of the scheme.

Recommendations for promotional and communication methods

Promotion of shadowing opportunities

The key finding from the Focus Group was how students wish to be communicated with about activities such as Work Shadowing. Currently, sessions are promoted by using Course Community Forums (where everyone on a given course receives an email). Respondents suggested that this was the least effective way to communicate with students, with the majority of the group claiming that they automatically delete such emails without even reading the content. Improvement suggestions included the introduction of a fortnightly 'Employability Newsletter' sent by a member of staff to all SBS students. This would include details of all employability activity and how to get involved. The idea of having a 'face behind the email' was a recurrent

theme for all the respondents. Knowing the sender would encourage the students to open, read and potentially get involved with whatever the email is advertising as they feel they 'know' the sender and want to help/get involved/liaise with this individual.

Promote the scheme using relevant mediums for users

A key difference found whilst researching was the difference in audience when promoting work shadowing on the Universities main websites, with the majority using the site to get students involved. As SBS have a very B2B focussed website, the focus of the potential work shadowing content needs to be employer focussed (effectively running alongside the current WWOS campaign). Other mediums such as SHU's Blackboard site and Employability areas on which students are most engaged and where future shadowing sessions would need to be advertised. Further research into which of these University services SBS students are most active and engaged with is essential to ensure ultimate engagement for the work shadowing scheme.

Interactive website

The process of applying for and gathering information regarding work shadowing is currently very interactive with lots of links/documents to click through on all other websites. This interactivity and easy access will encourage students to apply as the process is hassle free and opportunities are relatively easy to find. This interactivity is something SBS should consider if the shadowing scheme is implemented as it is also easy and logical for the students to follow.

Discussion Points

The title of 'Work Shadowing'

As discussed above, a key finding from the Focus Group conducted was the attitudes towards the title of the scheme. For some students, the title wasn't an issue as it described exactly what the session would entail. However, others suggested that the title of the scheme would discourage them from applying. This contrast in opinion is something that the Hub will need to consider before implementing the scheme in semester 1. With the current title, the pilot sessions did attract a significant number of applicants. However, as the recommendation states - further research and testing into different campaign titles is needed to successfully target as many students as possible.

Length of work shadowing sessions

The topic of the length of work shadowing sessions has been recurrent throughout the research and pilot sessions. A few students who were contacted regarding the scheme suggested that the sessions simply weren't long enough and should be longer or happen on multiple occasions. However, longer sessions could potentially clash with other employability offerings. It has been found that if the student wishes to further the relationship with the host organisation - this can be done using their own initiative and time. Finally, this research has found that despite initial negative thoughts regarding the length of shadowing, once students had completed a session, this opinion was changed. The proposed 2-4 hour sessions proved ample and beneficial for those taking part. This point needs to be stressed in promotional materials.

Level of responsibility

Finally, the focus group also led to the discussion of work shadowing students having a slight level of responsibility when completing the session. This concept wasn't tested in the pilot sessions with the students simply going to visit and learning about the roles and the organisations. Some students suggested that if there was slight responsibility involved, they would be more inclined to apply. However, for an organisation this could create the following issues;

- extra commitment from the host organisation - after already giving up a full morning/afternoon
- the length of the session would restrict any task with a significant level of responsibility to be completed
- work shadowing could clash with other Employability Hub activities such as student projects and benefits of would not comply to the core aims of the scheme

Having responsibility involved in sessions should not become a mandatory part of work shadowing as the current format stresses that is simply for insights into industry and has proved successful with any responsibility in the pilot sessions.

Conclusion

Overall, after analysing the research and the pilot work shadowing sessions it is recommended that Sheffield Business School implement the work shadowing scheme into their portfolio of Employability activities and initiatives with a focus on level 4, early level 5 and international level 7 students. This

decision has been made despite an unsteady start of the pilot, with organisations not committing and fully understanding the benefits a work shadowing session can offer, once they did - attitudes towards the scheme changed. There were also issues with sourcing sessions and getting employers to commit to a specific time and date. However, once the scheme was further explained and sessions completed, employers' outlooks towards work shadowing changed dramatically - with organisations becoming much more flexible and committed to getting involved with the scheme.

Another influencing factor to this decision was the feedback from students and employers once sessions had been completed. Likewise, this was also evident for the employers who had hosted sessions - with some stating that it befitted the organisation and boosted staff morale. It was also found that the commitment and resource usage was relatively lower than expected with arranging and monitoring shadowing sessions taking less time than expected for team members.

However, the following factors need to be considered when work shadowing is fully implemented in academic year 14/15.

Firstly, after primary and secondary research into marketing methods used by SBS and competing Universities, it is essential that work shadowing communications are effective, sent to the appropriate audiences on popular and well used mediums. Further research into how different students use different media forms needs to be further explored. Also, the key issue with shadowing is sourcing host organisations, effective use of the CRM and B2B contacts/systems that SBS already have is essential so that potential future hosts can be contacted with a prior knowledge of the organisation. Overall, the proposed work shadowing scheme achieves its overall aims and will hopefully further enhance the employability of SBS students.

Appendix

Appendix 1. Example of Blackboard advertisement sent to students

Want to know what it's like to work in the sector your studying? Applying for placements/graduate roles but don't have enough work experience?

Sheffield Business School are offering a range of Work Shadowing sessions in July across various sectors including HR and Events Management.
Please find details of our latest session below;

Work Shadowing Opportunity – Events & Conferences	
Company name	Sheffield Hallam University
Website	http://www.shu.ac.uk/
Description of work shadowing opportunity	Sheffield Hallam University organise and host a variety of events and conferences both internally and externally. The successful student will get the opportunity to shadow one of the SHU Events Team at the ISEA Conference 2014 to gain insight into what was required to organise such an event. It is a great opportunity to see what background/planning goes into large event planning and what responsibilities/challenges event organisers can face. The student will have the opportunity to ask questions and learn about the different roles within the large and diverse events team at Sheffield Hallam University.
Time / Date	Wednesday 16th July 2014 9am-5pm
Location	Sheffield Hallam University City Campus Sheffield S1 1WB
How to apply	Please read the attached guidance prior to applying for the work shadowing session and complete the online form link
Deadline	Wednesday July 9th 2014
Eligibility	SBS students (applications from all students are accepted but priority will be given to students with the least work experience)
Any queries?	If you have any questions about the work shadowing opportunity please contact Lucy Macbeth or Felicity Mendoza on 0114 225 3613

How to apply

If you would like to be considered for a specific opportunity please click on the [link](#) and fill out the short form. In order to match you to the right work shadowing visit we will ask:

- what interests you in this opportunity
- what you hope to get out of it
- what your career ambitions are
- what do you perceive as the main obstacles to you achieving your career goals
-

Did you know...?

- There are many ways that you can become more employable such as joining a student society, becoming a course rep or taking part in a group project, internship or placement, please contact us if you would like to find out more or visit <http://www.shu.ac.uk/sbs/study-us/take-advantage-great-opportunities-enhance-your-employability>

Apply now

Queries or comments

Please contact us on 0114 225 3138, email sbsemployabilityhub@shu.ac.uk or follow us on Twitter @SBSEmhub

Appendix 2. Focus Group questions

Focus Group Questions

Background

When you started your placement/graduate role, did the environment differ to your expectations?

Did you feel you had the relevant experience of a professional environment?

Did you feel fully prepared to enter such an environment?

Would a short experience in the area in which you are studying enhance your confidence in applying for/starting certain roles?

(INTERVIEWER TO EXPLAIN WHAT WORK SHADOWING IS)

Work Shadowing

Have you heard about work shadowing?

Have you ever taken part in a work shadowing session (SHU or not SHU)?

What you would assume a work shadowing session would consist of?

Would the opportunity to shadow someone in your chosen career sector/area interest you?

Benefits

If work shadowing schemes were available at SBS, would you be interested in participating?

How often do you look for employability activities such as work experience/internships etc.?

Would you see work shadowing as a CV enhancing experience?

How do you search for employment/work experience opportunities?

Appendix 3. Work Shadowing - Guidance notes for students

Work Shadowing - Guidance for Students

	Work Shadowing Opportunity
Job title of host (if relevant to work shadowing opportunity)	
Company name	
Website	
Company description	
Description of work shadowing opportunity	
Time / Date	
Location	
How to apply	Please read the attached guidance prior to applying for the work shadowing session and complete the online form (see link embedded in text)
Deadline	[allow at least 2 weeks if possible]
Eligibility	[eg SBS students]
Any queries?	If you have any questions about the work shadowing opportunity please contact Felicity Mendoza on 0114 225 3613 or Gemma Lancaster / Rachel Keeton on 0114 225 3393.

What is work shadowing?

A work shadowing visit involves spending time in an organisation and observing someone in a specific role or business area. Participating students will be matched to a host employer for a short, defined period of time. Students taking part in work shadowing may be included in meetings, staff training or events attended by members of staff and host employers may seek your feedback or opinions during the session. Work shadowing is an unpaid, extra-curricular activity so participation is optional.

What work shadowing is not...

Work shadowing does not involve taking on a particular role and you will not be allocated tasks, duties or responsibilities. It can give you an excellent insight into what a particular job involves and the skills it requires, although it is unlikely to develop your own skills.

What are the benefits of work shadowing?

- You can learn more about your chosen career in a short space of time
- You can build up your professional networks
- You get the chance to test your assumptions about the role or sector
- You do not have to commit a great deal of time
- You will have plenty of opportunity to ask questions and find out what they really think about their work
- You can gain first-hand advice from someone already working in the sector that interests you
- You can add the experience to your CV to demonstrate your interest in the role, organisation or sector

How does it work?

- You apply via short online form (make sure you are available on the time and date and can get to the business address)
- Once matched you will have a ½ hour appointment with an employment advisor who will help you prepare
- You will travel to the business on the arranged time and date for the work shadowing session (unfortunately we are not able to reimburse travel expenses)
- After your visit you will have a ½ hour debrief session with an employment advisor to discuss the visit and consider next steps

Time commitment

Work shadowing is flexible and the amount of time you will spend with the host employer will be agreed in advance. A session might last about 4 hours (e.g. a morning or an afternoon), it could involve a series of half days over a semester or it could be a total of 3 consecutive days. Work shadowing should not exceed more than 20 hours in any one week. The timing and time period can be negotiated with the host employer in advance.

How to apply

If you would like to be considered for a specific opportunity please click on the [link](#) and fill out the short form. In order to match you to the right work shadowing visit we will ask:

- what interests you in this opportunity
- what you hope to get out of it
- what your career ambitions are
- what do you perceive as the main obstacles to you achieving your career goals

Eligibility

Work shadowing opportunities are open to all SBS students. The most suitable student will be matched to the work shadowing opportunity using the information provided. Priority will be given to

- students with little or no work experience in the UK
- students from levels 4, 5 and 7

How to get the most out of work shadowing

Before the visit:

- Go prepared to your appointment with an employment advisor
- Do some background research into the organisation, [the sector](#) and [the role](#) of the person you are going to visit.
- [Plan how you are going to get there](#) and give yourself plenty of time
- Check if you need to take lunch
- Make a note of the contact name and number of the host
- Think of some relevant questions for the host in advance (see below for examples)

During the visit:

- Ask questions
- Ask for feedback on your CV
- Network - get contact details
- Ask about future opportunities

After the visit:

- Share your reflections with an employment advisor
- Set up a LinkedIn profile and add your new contacts
- Update your CV
- Consider other ways to boost your employability e.g. join a society, become a course rep
- Complete a feedback questionnaire

Some suggested questions for your host:

About the role

- What qualifications and training helped you to get to this position?
- How has your career progressed?
- What do you like most and least about your work?
- What is the most interesting thing you have been involved in?
- What difficult issues have you had to deal with?
- Where do you see yourself going from here?

About the organisation

- When was the business started and how has it developed over the years?
- What changes have you seen to the organisation whilst you have been here?
- What is the structure of the organisation?
- Who are your customers?

- How do you market your product / service?
- Who are your main competitors?
- Do you recruit graduates or student interns?

About the sector

- What are the main opportunities in this sector?
- What are the challenges and threats in the sector?
- Is the sector different in different regions / countries?

Equality and Diversity - Sheffield Hallam University is intent on advancing equality and diversity as key features within all its activities, as it believes this to be ethically right and socially responsible. To this end, the University acknowledges the following basic rights for all members and prospective members of its community:

- to be treated with respect and dignity
- to be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices
- to receive encouragement to reach their full potential
- to be provided with a safe, supportive and welcoming environment - for staff, for students and for visitors;

These rights carry with them responsibilities and the University requires all members of the community to recognise these rights and to act in accordance with them in all dealings with fellow members of the University.

For students who have a disability, the decision to disclose this to an employer is a personal and individual one. We therefore recommend that any student who has one reads the enclosed 'Disclosing your disability to potential employers' information leaflet. We strongly recommend that you contact a member of the Employability Hub to discuss your options if you identify as having a disability.

[Did you know...?](#)

[There are many ways that you can become more employable such as joining a student society, becoming a course rep or taking part in a group project, internship or placement, please contact us if you would like to find out more or visit <http://www.shu.ac.uk/sbs/study-us/take-advantage-great-opportunities-enhance-your-employability>](#)

[Apply now](#)

[Queries or comments](#)

[Please contact us on 0114 225 3138, email \[sbsemployabilityhub@shu.ac.uk\]\(mailto:sbsemployabilityhub@shu.ac.uk\) or follow us on Twitter @SBSEmhub](#)