Work Shadowing Guide
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King’s is committed to encouraging, supporting and delivering development for staff throughout the university using a wide range of learning opportunities. Work shadowing is an excellent self-development tool, which provides an opportunity for career development, networking and sharing best practice. Work shadowing has many potential benefits for King’s. It can help improve communications across departments, directorates and faculties.

This guide is for members of staff interested in gaining a better understanding of another role within the university and aspects of the work involved in it. These guidelines are designed to provide clear step-by-step instructions of work shadowing to ensure it is a valuable and enjoyable experience. A planning tool and evaluation form have also been designed to complement this guide.

**What is Work Shadowing?**

Work shadowing is an opportunity to work alongside another individual for a period of time, in order to gain insight into their role or department, learn from a more experienced colleague, and enhance performance. It can be used as a networking tool and an opportunity for sharing best practice.

The type of shadowing can differ depending on the objectives for the experience. This guide is designed to be flexible so that objectives and practicalities can be discussed and decided between the shadow and host beforehand to ensure both parties get the most out of the experience.

**Work Shadowing Principles**

- Opportunity to take part in a learning exchange
- Learning method to enhance personal development
- Fully inclusive scheme open to all
- No direct costs or payments to be involved
Benefits of Work Shadowing

Work shadowing has a number of benefits for King’s as an organisation, for the individual Shadow and their Host.

**King’s**

- Development of Shadow and Host
- Sharing best practice
- Networking tool – facilitate the breaking down of internal barriers across the organisation
- Improve communication across departments, faculties and sites
- Different perspectives
- Inclusive culture - gaining fresh perspectives from diverse range of people

**Shadow**

- Gain insight into the roles and responsibilities of other members of staff and other departments
- Reflect and learn from the experiences of colleagues
- Networking
- See the bigger picture and understand more about how the university functions
- “Test out” possible career options
- Clarity on career opportunities

**Host**

- Network with colleagues from different areas
- Share best practice
- Review and reflection on work practices
- Develop mentoring skills
- Learn from the experiences of colleagues
**Key Roles**

**Shadow**
A Shadow needs to firstly consider how and what they hope to achieve from a shadowing assignment. They are responsible for discussing and updating their manager, arranging the shadowing assignment, updating the Organisation Development team and ensuring their work is not impacted by preparing a time planner in advance. The Shadow also needs to report on their experience by completing a reflection log. The Shadow has overall responsibility for arranging and coordinating their assignment.

**Host**
The Host is responsible for planning, preparing and carrying out key shadowing activities, which will provide the Shadow with learning opportunities. This involves completing and agreeing an activity and time planner and ensuring the assignment is structured and time bound. A Host should consider the time they have available to dedicate to the assignment and they should choose activities that would provide the best experience for the Shadow.

**Manager**
The line manager should firstly discuss the objectives, key activities and timelines with their team member who is undertaking the work shadowing assignment. They should consider if work shadowing is relevant to the Shadow’s work or development and if it fits in with their workload and commitments. Line managers should provide guidance on possible Hosts or set up the shadowing opportunity using their internal and external network. However, the Shadow is responsible for arranging the assignment and coordinating the assignment.

**Organisation Development**
Organisation Development at King’s is committed to ensuring development and learning opportunities are available to all staff, add value and support professional and personal development. In order to ensure value is gained from work shadowing opportunities, all Shadows and Hosts must complete an evaluation form and submit to od@kcl.ac.uk at the end of the assignment. Organisation Development is available to provide advice and guidance on work shadowing before, during or after the assignment.
**Observation**

- The Shadow will spend an agreed period of time observing the host during their day-to-day activities.
- This type of shadowing works best when a Shadow is looking to gain a greater understanding of what a Host’s job role actually consists of.
- The Host will provide opportunities for questions and debrief to ensure that both parties benefit from the shadowing.

**Regular Briefings**

- The Shadow shadows the Host for specific activities over a period of time.
- This type of shadowing provides short periods of focused activity.
- This works best when the individuals work near to each other and the Host can then advise of dates and times of specific activities which are of value to understanding the role.

**Hands On**

- This is an extension of the observation model detailed above.
- The Shadow starts to undertake some of the tasks they have observed.
- This provides the Shadow with hands on experience of the role whilst being supervised by the Host.
- This type of job shadowing is not always possible and would need to be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

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**All shadowing assignments must:**

- Involve the line manager and Organisation Development
- Be time bound
- Have agreed objectives
- Be confidential
Key Considerations and Etiquette

To help you get the most out of this experience, here are a few tips to use in preparing for the shadowing assignment:

**Capacity and Time**
Work shadowing will involve some time spent away from work activities. Careful timing and planning is required to ensure it does not become disruptive.

**Confidentiality**
Some information learned during the shadowing arrangement may be classified as confidential to the Shadow and the Host. This must not be divulged to any other parties.

Some confidential information will be defined as such by the person being shadowed. An element of discretion must be used by the shadow and it may be necessary to withdraw from the shadowing arrangement from time to time because of confidentiality.

However, colleagues are encouraged to share 'good practice' and to engage in the art of positive feedback.

Note: some activities can never be ‘shadowed’, for example, job interviews, disciplinary hearings or appraisal interviews.

**Accessibility**
Check whether your Host or Shadow has any specific requirements you need to be aware of and take into account throughout your work shadowing.

‘No Fault Divorce Clause’
If either party is unhappy with the relationship, it can be terminated without blame by either party.
At the end of the shadowing experience, it is important that the Shadow and the Host both reflect on what they have learned.

- What were the main things you learned from the experience?
- What did you enjoy about it?
- What did you least enjoy?
- How can the lessons learned assist in you in your current role?
- Was the experience what you expected?
- Has the shadowing identified any future areas for development?

The reflective log is designed to capture and record this feedback. Debriefs with line managers should take place after the assignment for both the Shadow and the Host. This debrief should focus on addressing these questions and completing the reflection log.

Completed logs should be sent to Organisation Development (od@kcl.ac.uk) who will review and make recommendations on next steps.
Shadowing another member of staff will help you to understand other roles and departments across the university. You will have an insight into your hosts work and learn from their experiences. You might be introduced to other key contacts and build up your professional network. You will also have the opportunity to discuss your role with someone outside of your immediate team, benefitting from a different perspective and fresh insight.

**What should I do first?**

You should first seek the permission of your line manager and discuss with them the type of role you would like to shadow, what you want to get out of the experience and the learning and skills you hope to obtain. This meeting should also clarify the objectives of the shadowing. The period and activity to be shadowed should also be subject to discussion and to the agreement of your line manager, who will have to consider the relevance of the shadowing on your current and/or future roles as well as possible staffing issues. Provide your line manager with a copy of the Managers Guide.

**How do I get started?**

Consider who might be an appropriate person for you to shadow. You might have some ideas already based on people you have already met or worked with. If you are not sure, think about a department or team you are interested in and do some research on the roles that exist within it. Ask your colleagues for their suggestions and discuss it with your line manager to get their input.

**How should I prepare?**

Once you have agreement from your host, consider what it is you are hoping to achieve from job shadowing prior to starting. You can discuss this with your line manager or host and set objectives to ensure you get the most from the experience. As well as thinking about what you want to achieve during the shadowing, also consider what you will do as a result. Think about what it is you want to know about your host’s job, department or team. Why did you select this particular host? Use your reasons to guide any questions you want to ask or identify any specific elements of the job you want to know more about.

Share your objectives with your host prior to the shadowing taking place so that they know what you are expecting and can prepare activities that will help you achieve your aims.

You should arrange a briefing meeting with the host where the objectives and ground rules for shadowing are agreed. This meeting should be held at least one week before the shadowing takes place and should include consideration of the following:

- Objectives of the placement
- Areas of particular interest
- How work shadowing fits in with the shadow’s wider professional development
- Agreement on issues of confidentiality
The shadowing activities, dates and times
Complete the Work Shadowing Planner

Preparation by both the Host and the Shadow is essential if the experience is to be beneficial. If you have any special requirements, make sure you discuss these with your host in advance so that adjustments can be put in place for you.

Before the assignment the shadow should:

- Provide the host with an outline of their expectations for the period
- Familiarise themselves with the procedures and working practices of the host
- Ensure that their work colleagues are aware of their absence and appropriate cover is arranged

What should I do during the assignment?

Use this opportunity to learn as much as you can and, if appropriate, establish a useful list of contacts you can keep in touch with after the shadowing takes place. Make sure you take notes so you have information to take away and reflect on after the shadowing.

Let your colleagues know about your absence and feedback any learning with your team. You will be gaining an understanding of how other departments work and how other roles support the organisation so make sure your team benefits from this knowledge too. However, it is also important you maintain confidentiality too if sensitive information is shared with you by your Host. If in doubt, ask your host if something you discuss is confidential.

Throughout the hosting experience, make sure you provide your Host with feedback and check-in to ensure you are achieving your original objectives or assess if those objectives should change as you progress.

During the assignment the shadow should:

- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Provide the host with feedback and reflection on the experience
- Ensure the host is informed if their absence is unavoidable
- Show tact, discretion and awareness by withdrawing when circumstances deem it appropriate
What should I do after the assignment?

Once you have completed all of your agreed activities take time to reflect on your learning experiences. Thank your Host and their team for taking their time to provide you with this experience. Consider debriefing with your manager or speak with the Organisation Development team to help you reflect on what your next steps might be.

Complete your reflections log and send to od@kcl.ac.uk. Organisation Development will review your log and make any recommendations on any training or other OD activities, which might be of interest to you.

### After the assignment the shadow should:

- Thank their Host for hosting them
- Debrief with manager
- Consider key learning experiences and next steps
- Complete reflections log and send to Organisation Development
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Shadow Checklist</th>
<th>Complete</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Consider:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td> Why have you decided to have a shadowing assignment?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td> What do you hope to gain and achieve?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td> Who or what role would you like to shadow?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td> What kind of activities would you like to engage in (types of shadowing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Discussion and permission from line manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Agreement from Host</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Complete time planner and activities with Host at initial meeting</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Complete shadowing</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Send a thank you message to your Host</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Debrief with manager and consider next steps</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Complete reflection and send to OD</td>
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