



Alpha Epsilon Delta

Shadowing Program

The Pennsylvania State University

Alpha Epsilon Delta (AED) is the National Health Preprofessional Honor Society dedicated to the encouragement and recognition of excellence in preprofessional health scholarship. Our Society welcomes all students engaged in the pursuit of a professional development, provides a forum for students with common interests, and extends a program of service to benefit the college/university community.

AED Penn State

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The value of the clinical externship



The clinical externship, or shadowing as it is more commonly known, is essential for pre-health students' success. Undergraduate students intending to enter the medical field, whether as physicians, nurses, or physician assistants, absolutely must obtain shadowing experience prior to applying to respective health education institutions. Far more important than the qualification, however, is the intrinsic value added to the student's drive to enter healthcare.

“Experience in medical and paramedical areas often contributes toward an understanding of health care delivery problems and helps to solidify the basis of the student’s motivation toward a career in medicine”

– University of Florida College of Medicine.

“We want to see that you have tested your commitment to medicine and that you’re aware of what you’re entering into.”

– Harvard Medical School.

Shadowing enables students to obtain crucial knowledge of how physicians work on a daily basis, gain insight into how a doctor deals with real situations, discover how patients should be treated with empathy and respect, and above all, decide if medicine should really be their future career choice.

Unfortunately, students at Penn State have been unable to easily shadow local physicians and other health professionals. Penn State AED is building a shadowing program which cultivates a bridge between pre-health students and healthcare professionals.

Meeting the need of our members, we aim to empower the next generation of hopeful medical professionals.



Penn State AED Shadowing Program Logistics



Our shadowing program rotates select students through a network of healthcare professionals on a semester or yearly basis. Applicants to the program are selected based on shadowing need, academic performance, commitment level, and standing within the club. Once selected, students are matched to healthcare professionals based on two factors: field of interest and intended career path.

The student then becomes the prime mover, and coordinates with the medical practice all matters scheduling, clearance, and communication.

Students in the shadowing program are expected to be highly accountable and responsible to the guidelines and communications of their preceptor.

Meanwhile, health care professionals enter the program as preceptors based entirely on their own availability and preference; health care professionals may join the program for a fixed or indefinite time period.

Once a healthcare professional joins the program as a preceptor, the executive board works to better understand practice specific nuances related to scheduling constraints, required clearances such as immunizations or background checks, and any outstanding preceptor or administrative concerns.

Preceptors are expected to communicate with their matched student, and be clear on expectations and practice-specific guidelines. Also, preceptors are encouraged to actively engage the students as mentors, providing valuable real-world experience and advice.



Call to action



We ask you to please consider our Shadowing Program and join as an active preceptor.

Your experience in your field is extremely valuable for up and coming pre-health students. Not only does shadowing provide a window of reality into the medical field, the relationships between students and their preceptors are both highly fulfilling and invaluable to accomplishing career goals in medicine.

We are more than willing to discuss our vision and address any questions you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact us, and we thank you for your time and consideration.

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“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”

— Benjamin Franklin

“Medicine is learned by the bedside and not in the classroom. Let not your conceptions of disease come from the words heard in the lecture room or read from the book. See and then reason and compare and control. But see first.”

— William Osler

