

NEXT Training Session

Northwestern Career Advancement

Northwestern Alumni Association

Northwestern

Definition and Expectations



- **What is an Externship?**
  - An opportunity to interact with and observe a professional in a career you might be interested in pursuing.
- **How long is an Externship?**
  - Typically, **one day**, though this can be negotiated between you and your alumni host.
- **What can I expect from an Externship?**
  - To gain experience and knowledge through observing and speaking with the host employer in their work environment (virtual or in-person).

Learning Outcomes

By participating in NEXT you will be able to:

1. List the typical duties associated with the job of the alumni host you shadow
2. Describe the skills/qualities needed to be successful in the job you observed
3. Articulate the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing a career in the industry you learned about through shadowing in the context of your personal skills, interests, and goals

Logistics

By now you should:

- Be matched with an alumni host



By Monday, December 21:

- Connected with your alumni host



By the week of February 1:

- Scheduled your externship date with your host



By early June:

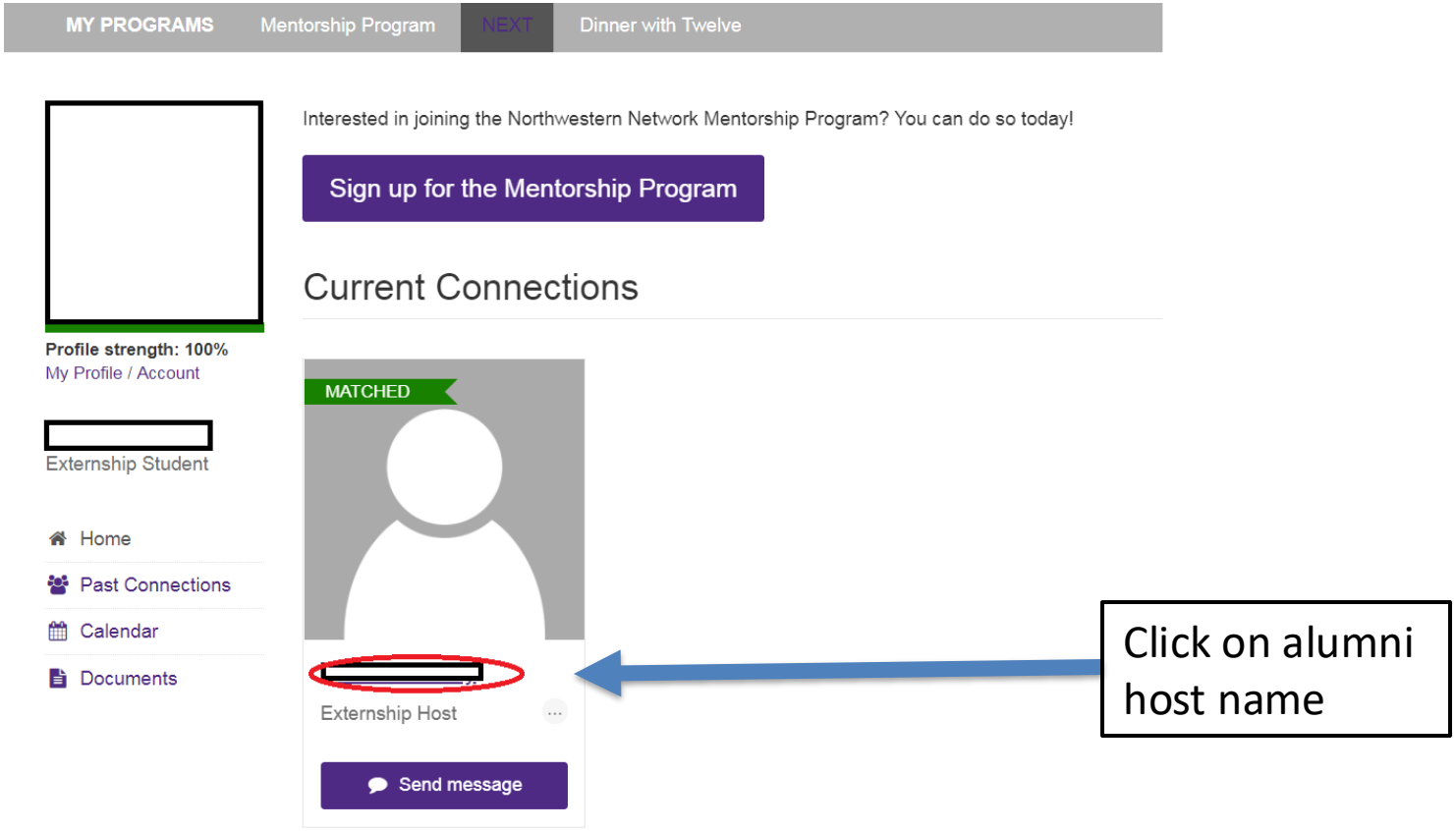
- Completed your externship

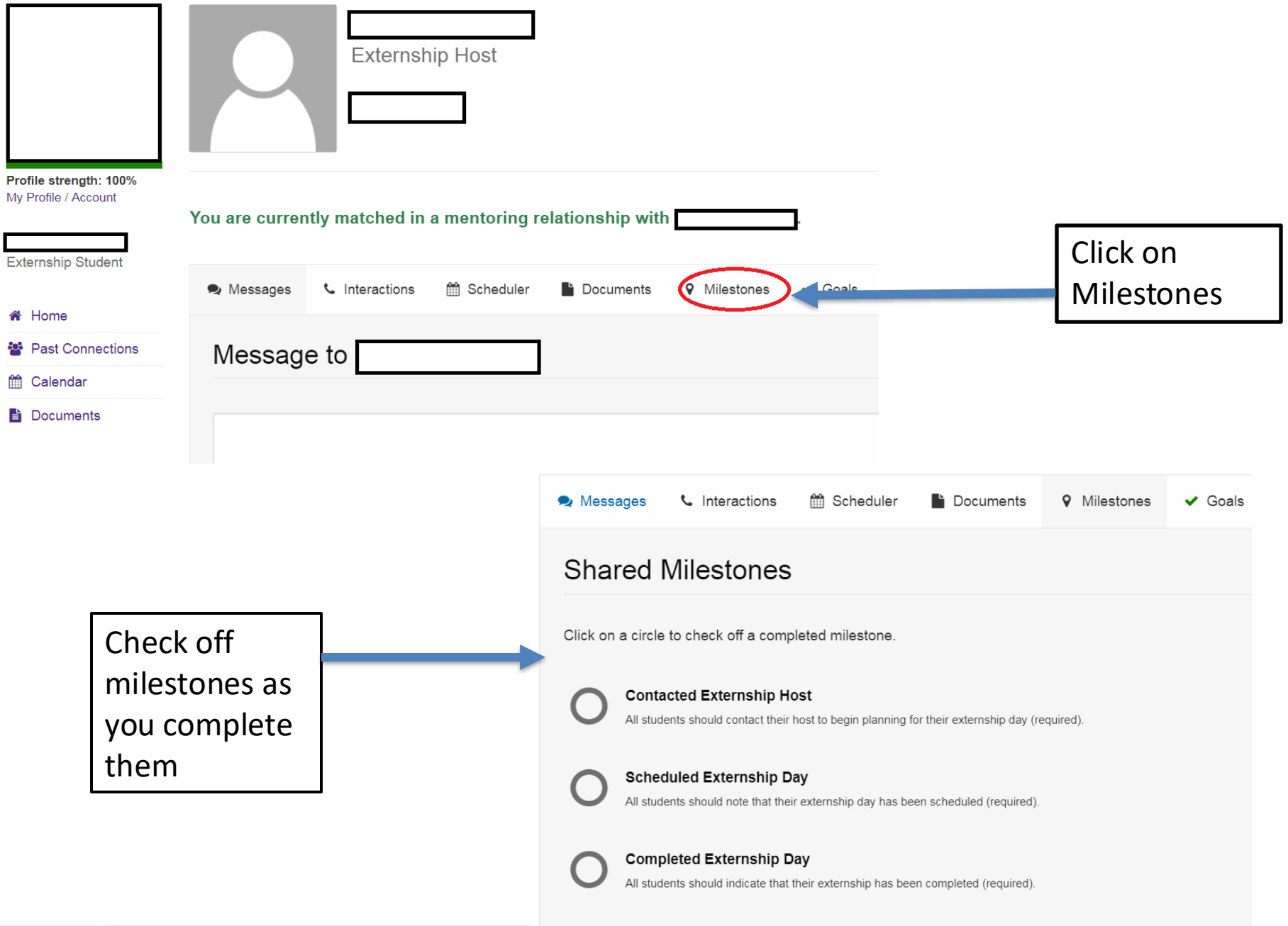
Milestones

- Throughout the NEXT experience students will need to check off milestones to show their progress toward completing the experience
  - Contacted Externship Host
  - Scheduled Externship Day
  - Completed Externship Day
- Survey to follow



Accessing Milestones




Externship Host
Profile strength: 100%
My Profile / Account
Externship Student
Home
Past Connections
Calendar
Documents
You are currently matched in a mentoring relationship with
Messages
Interactions
Scheduler
Documents
Milestones
Goals
Message to
Click on Milestones
Messages
Interactions
Scheduler
Documents
Milestones
Goals
Shared Milestones
Click on a circle to check off a completed milestone.
Contacted Externship Host
All students should contact their host to begin planning for their externship day (required).
Scheduled Externship Day
All students should note that their externship day has been scheduled (required).
Completed Externship Day
All students should indicate that their externship has been completed (required).
Check off milestones as you complete them

Introductory Email

- Reach out to the alumni host's email (if available). If not, message in the platform.
  - Follow up after a few days if you haven't heard back
- **What to include:**
  - A thank you to the host for choosing you
  - Details about your class year, major, school/college
  - 1-3 sentences about why you are interested in their company/career
  - Next steps & logistics
    - Ask what dates the alumni would like to host you (remember it's according to *their* schedule)

Before Externship

- **Questions to ask alumni host:**
  - What is the appropriate attire?
  - What is the agenda or schedule for the day?
  - Confirm additional logistics and details (e.g., virtual platform, parking, etc.)



- **Things to look up on your own:**
  - Host's profile and company on LinkedIn
  - Company mission and goals

Additional Things to Consider

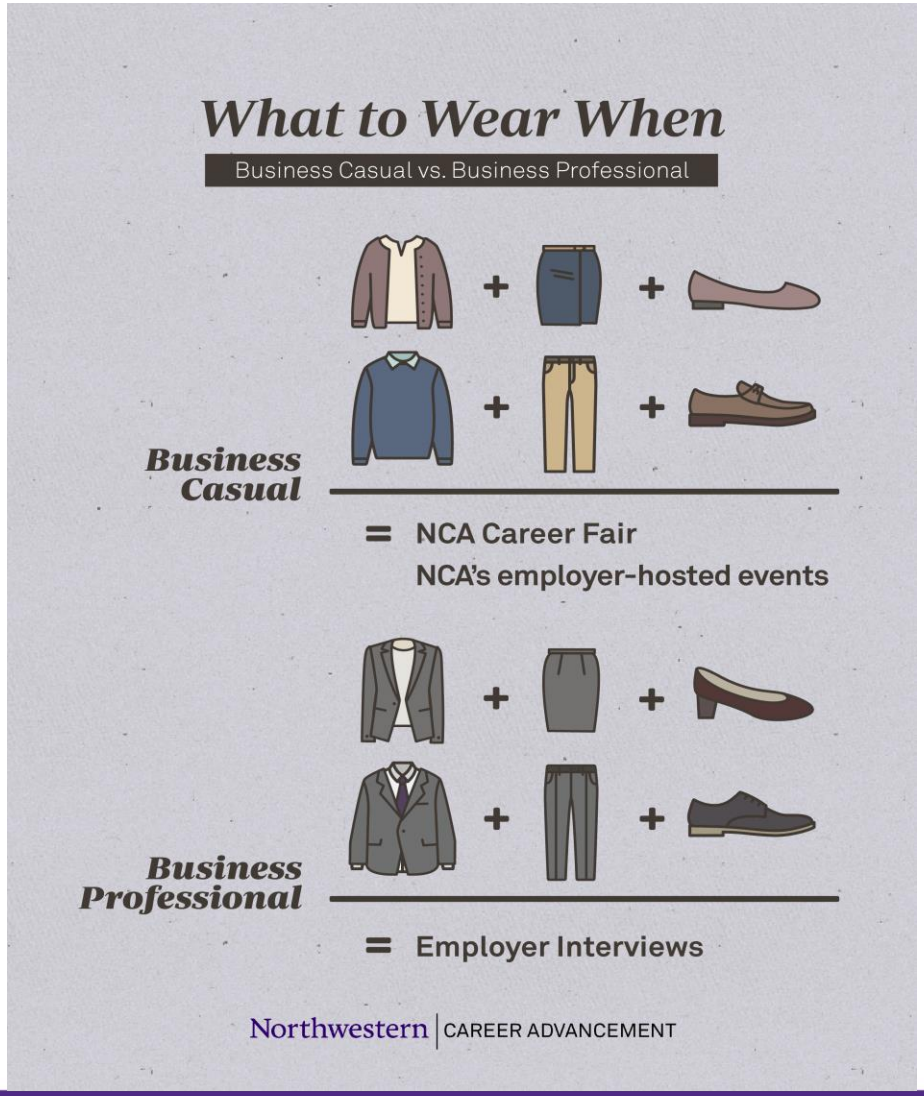


- Having a notepad and pen nearby to take notes
- Resume for review (optional)
- Make sure your phone and other devices are on silent so that notifications are not disrupting the session
- Plans for your break time to decompress from the work environment

Dress Code

- An externship is still an opportunity to make an impression on your host and their organization, whether virtual or in-person
- If the attire is business professional and you do not own a suit, ask about the possibility of wearing a variation or what is needed depending on the agenda of the externship day

Business Casual vs. Business Professional



*More information on [NCA's website]

Preparing for Your Externship

- Learn about the industry and the company prior to your scheduled day:
  - **Industry:**
    - What do people do in this industry?
    - What are its functional areas?
    - What kind of skill sets are expected?
    - What are the current trends in this industry?
  - **Company:**
    - What is their mission/purpose?
    - What are their philosophies and core values?
    - What is their reputation with clients/customers?
    - Has the company been in the news lately?

Resources for Research

- Company Website
  - About Us, PR Releases, Media, etc. for recent news about the organization
- LinkedIn
- Glassdoor
- Firsthand



Create a Plan

- Set goals and expectations with your alumni host
- What questions do you want to have answered by the time you finish the day?
- Ideas on how to use your time:
  - Request a virtual or in-person tour if alum is on site
  - Sit in on a meeting
  - Watch your host “in action”
  - Meet with other individuals
  - Ask your host to review your resume

Sample Externship Day

Sample Agenda:

Time:	**Name/Location:**
9:00 AM – 9:30 AM	Welcome and walking tour of organization
9:30 AM – 10:00 AM	Get to know each other and chat about career goals and NU
10:00 AM – 10:30 AM	BREAK (restroom, coffee, step outside, etc.)
10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	Join host's team meeting to learn about current projects
11:30 AM – 12:00 PM	Debrief team meeting and client expectation and goals
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	LUNCH
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM	Resume review, industry trends, and hiring practices
2:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Meeting with host's colleague in another department
3:00 PM – 3:30 PM	Meeting with HR to learn about roles and company specifics
3:30 PM – 4:30 PM	Additional questions, how to stay in touch, and wrap up

Potential Questions to Ask

Sample Goals	Sample Questions
To explore career fit	• How did you decide on this career? • How does this career fit your interests, values, and skills? • What are your primary responsibilities? • What skills are most important for success? • What kind of person does well in this industry/company?
To prepare for a career in a specific industry	• How did your time at NU (inside and outside the classroom) prepare you for this field? • What are some challenges to working in this industry? • What experiences should I engage in to be better prepared for this industry? • How is this field/industry changing?
To learn about a specific company	• It seems that every organization has its own personality. How would you characterize yours? • What do you like most/least about working for this company?
To learn internship/job strategies	• What are methods and resources for getting internships/jobs in this industry/company? • What resources would you recommend I use to find an internship/job in this industry? • Who else would you recommend I talk with about employment in this industry/company?

Networking



- **What is it?**
  - Established professional or personal connections with others
- **Why do we do it?**
  - To develop a mutual support system
  - To tap into a hidden employment market
  - To interact with people who are members of your target field
  - To explore career options
  - To market yourself to potential employers

Networking

- **Do:**
  - Listen and take notes (have something to take notes on; laptop, notebook, etc.)
  - Guide the flow of conversation by using your goals and prepared questions
  - Ask for referrals to other people in the field
- **Don't:**
  - Ask for a job or internship
  - Engage in negative conversations, gossip, or share unrelated information
  - Act uninterested. Be aware of nonverbal behavior.
  - Be afraid to ask questions

Develop Your Story

- **Professional Story**
  - Offers information that allows someone to connect with you over a shared interest or experience. Be prepared to talk about yourself by developing a 30 second story



- **How to do it**
  - Create a brief introduction to who you are
    - Offer a few key facts designed to generate a conversation allowing someone to get to know you.
  - Highlight strengths
    - Examples of what you enjoy or have become good at (from student activities, class, past or current internships)
  - What have you learned from self-evaluation?

During the Externship

- Be enthusiastic, polite, inquisitive, and energetic
- Take notes:
  - Write down questions you have throughout the day
  - Think of what you want to add to your resume about this experience
  - Brainstorm ways to stay connected to your host based on the conversations you are having and things you can connect on after the externship
- Avoid using your phone during the externship so you can stay engaged during the experience

After Your Externship

- Confirm that all milestones have been completed in the platform
- Complete the required survey
- Ask for contact information ("Do you mind if I have your email in case I think of any more questions?")
- Follow up with a thank you email within 48 hours
- Write down what you learned about the industry, job and/or company and how it fits (or doesn't) with your interests, values and skills
- Add your experience to your resume:

EXPERIENCE
NBC News, New York, NY March, 2024
Extern
- Shadowed Senior Producer to increase knowledge of national news show production
- Learned job functions and responsibilities of staff integral to production

After your Externship

- Maintain your relationship with your new networking contact(s)
- Set up new contact meetings for additional informational interviews (using LinkedIn & Our Northwestern)
- Connect with NCA for help with:
  - Further career exploration and self assessment
  - Resume/cover letter reviews
  - Internship and full-time job resources and search strategies
- Connect with NAA:
  - Join the Northwestern Network Mentorship Program
  - Attend webinars and other events

Alumni Quotes

When asked **What did you enjoy most about the externship program?** alumni replied:

"The chance to help out a fellow Wildcat. I also really appreciate that she spent a good deal of time researching so that she could ask great questions."

"It was fantastic to interact with a student interested in my field and provide her as many 'legs up' as I could."

"The opportunity to underscore the value of the NU alumni network to existing students."

Optional Social Media

- Use our #WhatsNEXTNU27 when mentioning your externship on social media
  - We would love to see the amazing connections that are being made between you and your alumni hosts

- Find NCA at @NUCareerAdvance and NAA at @NorthwesternAlumni on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Tag us!



Other Important Information

- **It Can't Be Repeated Enough:**
  - You are representing Northwestern University during your externship
  - Remember to be appreciative of your host
  - If you have any questions, concerns, or issues that arise at any point, please contact us: next.student@northwestern.edu
  - After the externship, there is no future obligation of any kind, by either the alumni host or the student.

Have fun!