

MAKING THE MOST OF A CAREER/JOB FAIR

Why Attend?

Attending a Career/Job Fair can be a great way to network. Employers are looking to hire students and alums for full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary, summer, or co-op employment. Attending a Career/Job Fair gives you the opportunity to meet prospective employers in person.

If a particular employer does not foresee any such opportunity for you within their organization, you may want to ask for ideas about other organizations where you could receive relevant experience. This is what networking is all about - getting referrals, leads, and ideas about potential employers.

Students who are not looking for employment can benefit from meeting employers and recruiters to learn about the types of positions within their organization. This information can give you exposure to a variety of occupations, industries, and potential work environments.

Have a Career Focus

Have some ideas about the specific type of position(s) you are seeking or the specific skills you have to offer and how those skills are of value to the employer. Your attitude is important to employers and recruiters, as they are looking for candidates who are motivated and enthusiastic about their career objectives.

Plan Your Time

Preview the list of employers ahead of time in order to identify the ones you are most interested in meeting (and to prevent missing an employer you are interested in that may leave early). A list of company names with general information about positions and/or academic requirements will be available prior to the Career/Job Fair. You may have to wait in a line before you have the opportunity to introduce yourself to an employer, so plan your time accordingly.

Dress Professionally

Dress in professional attire, usually a conservative suit, and avoid wearing any heavy fragrance. Find a restroom and use a mirror to be sure you are looking your best. A coat rack will be available to hang up your outerwear.

Bring Resumes

Have a professional looking resume on good quality bond paper. Bring enough copies for the prospective employers you want to meet. If you need help developing a resume, see a Career Counselor at the Career Development Center.

Prepare a Solid Introduction

Prepare and rehearse a short (less than a minute) mini-script for introducing yourself to employers. This script should include your name, career interests, education, experience, and skills most relevant to the employer's needs.

Ask about career opportunities in your area of interest, and when appropriate, display your knowledge of the company and ask relevant questions. Express your interests in working for the organization and avoid asking questions about salary and benefits. Focus instead on what you can offer the company.

Review a list of potential questions to help you be better prepared to answer specific questions. Such a list can be obtained from the Career Development Center.

Make a Good First Impression

Be sure to greet the employers with a firm handshake and good eye contact. Be enthusiastic and demonstrate positive verbal and nonverbal communication at all times. Lasting impressions are often made within the first few seconds of an introduction.

Bring Your Planning Calendar

Be ready to set up appointments with interviewers. You may also want to allow for time to complete an employment application.

Have all the necessary details with you so you are able to accurately and thoroughly complete the application. Space will be set aside for students to

fill out such paper work. Have some change available in case you want to make a copy before you return the application.

Follow-up

Keep notes about conversations and specific details you will need for our follow-up. After speaking to many people, it can be very difficult to keep individuals, job titles, and employers straight. Get a business card and make sure you know the person's correct name and title.

Send thank you letters to employers and recruiters who gave you a pre-screening for an interview. If you do not get to meet with a specific representative of interest, you may want to contact the organization and let them know of your interest and that you would like the opportunity to meet with them to discuss your qualifications.

Tips to Remember

You are going to be "on display" for hours. Many employers will be watching you, your peers will become your competition, and you will have to keep your cool and sell yourself. Having said that, try to enjoy yourself.

Get enough sleep the night before and wake up in time to have a relaxed breakfast. Plan ahead so your suit, resumes and anything else you need is ready the day before the Career/Job Fair.

And remember, your best selling point is that you have a combination of personality, skills, dreams, and experiences that is completely unique. See you there!