



Career and Internship Services

Preparation Tips for the Career, Internship, and Graduate School Fair

What is a Career/Internship Fair?

It is a one-day event where employers and students can talk informally with each other. While fairs are intended to provide students with the opportunity to talk informally with employers to gain information about jobs, internships, the company or organization and the industry, employers will accept resumes and screen applicants on site, setting up interviews for another time.

Before The Career Fair

Define Your Goals

- To find jobs or internships that may be available?
- To seek information about companies?
- To make initial contacts/begin networking?
- To practice speaking to recruiters?

Prepare

- Obtain a list of the participating organizations.
- Gather information about the organizations with which you are unfamiliar. This will help you to prioritize organizations and prepare you to speak with a company representative.
- Explore all of your options! Have an open mind when you decide which organizations you want to visit. In addition to the positions listed, many larger organizations and businesses have a variety of positions and can provide you with the appropriate contact within the organization.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask the representative. Since you have already gathered available information about the organization, use the opportunity to request more specific information about positions, the training program, internship opportunities, career paths, etc.
- Prepare several copies of your updated resume to distribute to interested employers. You may want to prepare more than one version, depending on your goals.
- Prepare to discuss your skills, interests, background and career goals. How do your qualifications make you stand out?
- Obtain a notepad for your research and note-taking at the fair.
- Plan to dress professionally. Remember, first impressions count!
- Practice your handshake and greeting.

During The Career Fair

- Check in early! Orient yourself to the facility and the location of the employers.
- Review directory of participating employers and their profiles.
- Check your appearance. Remember, first impressions count even if you are just gathering information.
- Relax! Smile! You're prepared. It's time to make a positive impression.
- Conduct yourself professionally as you approach the interviewer. Respect each other's privacy as they speak with the company representative.
- As you approach the representative, establish eye contact, introduce yourself, present a firm handshake, and tell why you are interested in the organization.
- Market yourself! Be ready to discuss your qualifications and how they can benefit an employer.
- Be prepared to gather as much information as possible. Ask your prepared questions.

- Plan to take the lead in your conversations with the recruiters. Be positive, enthusiastic and self-confident!
- Keep copies of your resume handy to give to recruiters when appropriate.
- Use your notepad to write down any pertinent details or notes to facilitate follow-up calls and letters to employers.
- Obtain business cards of companies that interest you.
- Know when to move on. Offer a polite closure: ex. "It has been nice meeting you."
- Remember to thank recruiters for their time, information, literature, and any giveaways.

Suggested Questions to Ask

About the Company:

- Could you tell me the types of skills and experience you are seeking?
- What challenges do you see for your company?
- What are the areas of greatest growth in your company?
- Describe the usual college graduate entry-level position in your company.
- What do you like most about your company?
- Are there any immediate openings in your company? If not, what do you anticipate to be the future opportunities?
- Do you have any internships or summer jobs?
- Considering my particular career/internship interests, are there additional people in the organization whom I should contact?

About the Industry:

- What are the areas of growth?
- What should a college graduate know about your industry and/or company before he/she applies for a job?
- What professional associations or periodicals should I become familiar with in order to acquaint myself with what is happening industry-wide?

About the Occupation:

- What are the entry-level opportunities?
- What are the skills that are most important for a position in this field?
- Could you describe the "normal" career path in your company?
- What type of training is given to people entering this field?
- What advice would you give to someone who wants to break into this field?

After The Career Fair

- Make notes about the companies and employers while still fresh in your mind.
- Follow-up with thank you letters to recruiters that were particularly helpful and companies with whom you would like to pursue a relationship. Include a resume; ask for an interview, and/or follow-up with phone calls if appropriate.
- Set up a system to keep track of follow-up activities (e.g. file cards, binder, or whatever your personal taste dictates).
- Critique yourself: ask yourself what went well, and also what you might do differently in the future?
- Congratulate yourself on your efforts!