Career Fair Advice

Since 80% of jobs are located through networking, a career fair, especially one coordinated by the University, is a great way to make contact with potential employers. Whether you are looking for a job or gathering information to choose a major and/or career, attending a career fair can open many doors for you.

What to Expect
Initially, entering a career fair can be a bit overwhelming. Knowing what to expect can help ease anxiety.
- First, locate the registration table, which is normally near the entrance. Sign-in and make a nametag.
- Upon entering the room filled with tables and/or booths, survey the layout of the room. You may want to walk around the room a few times in order to get your bearings.
- If available, obtain a map of the room from registration so that you can locate your target employers.
- In most cases, human resource professionals staff the tables. Companies may also send alumni to on-campus career fairs.

Research
A career fair may have over 80 companies, which can be overwhelming. Familiarize yourself with the companies ahead of time as a way to ease any potential anxiety. Otherwise, it may feel like a test for which you didn’t study.
- Visit any websites the University Career Center has provided about the event because you will be able to access a list of companies with their respective websites.
- Look at the company’s website to learn about the types of jobs and related skills they are seeking.
- Use Google to do a search for additional information on your companies of interest.
- Rehearse how your skills and interests match the company’s mission and goals.

Making the Best Impression
The recruiters attending the career fair have some basic expectations.
- Job candidates should have a professional resume that has been critiqued by a career advisor.
- Bring enough copies of your resume on quality resume paper for your companies of interest plus a few more for good measure.
- Career fair participants should be neatly dressed and groomed. If you are looking for full-time jobs and internships, dress in business attire. For just gathering career information, business casual is appropriate.
- A professional portfolio pad is good for carrying resumes and for taking notes.

Be an Active Participant!
- Listen and watch as your fellow job seekers are talking to recruiters. You can learn a great deal about the “do’s and don’ts” of job searching from being a casual observer.
- Aside from listening and observing, actively approach employers. Do more than browse the job fair and passively pickup brochures and giveaways.
- To make the most of your time, you must introduce yourself to the employers and hand them your resume.

Hint: Before attending, you should prepare a one-minute introductory speech that includes your knowledge of the company and how your background matches the company’s needs. Offer a firm handshake, speak enthusiastically and confidently, and ask relevant questions. **Never leave the table without getting a business card!**

Don’t Forget to Follow-Up
Even after you have handed out your last resume, you are not finished!
- Within a week, send a thank you/cover letter with a resume to each employer you met at the career fair.
- Two weeks after you mail the letters, call the employers who have not contacted you. Confirm the receipt of your letter and resume and restate your interest in interviewing with the organization. The employer may schedule you right then or they may tell you where they are in the hiring process.
- Following-up will make you stand out among the hundreds of people they met at the job fair. Most importantly, you have showed your avid interest.

Not Just for Seniors
Career fairs provide all students with an excellent opportunity to gather career information that relates to their majors and interests. While seniors are usually looking for full-time positions, sophomores and juniors may look for internships. Other students may be investigating summer or part-time job opportunities. Nevertheless, all students can benefit by using the career fair to practice their networking skills.