

FAQs for Career/Job Fairs

Before Attending a Career/Job Fair:

What are the benefits of attending a job fair?

- Practice your self-presentation and marketing skills.
- Learn important labour market information.
- Make important connections that might lead to employment down the road.
- Employers may not always post their jobs. Attending a fair can expose you to positions not advertised.

Are there really jobs for me at job fairs?

- Of course! Whether you are an Arts, Science, Commerce or Engineering student, you need to be able to market the skills you have learned from your degree and therefore show how those skills are relevant to the types of job positions open in that company.

What do I wear?

- Dress professionally as if you were attending an interview. A two piece suit (for men and women) is probably your best option. Be sure to keep the accessories to a minimum. Use proper hygiene but keep perfumes/colognes and scents to a minimum.

Do I need to research the companies that will be there?

- This is a must!
- You want to research important factors like:
 - Key job qualifications
 - Financial stability of the company
 - Growth of the company
 - Common career paths and promotions
 - Benefits and compensation packages
 - Relocation policy
 - Culture of the company

How many people are at each booth?

- This depends on the employer. It is common at booths to see a team approach with Human Resources representatives, hiring managers and a recent graduate.

What should I bring with me?

- Updated resumes (the employer may ask you for one)
- Self-marketing cards
- Pens
- Notebook
- Bottle of water

Should I bring my resume? How do I create a tailored resume for a job fair?

- It is often recommended that you bring a few copies of your resume.
- For the companies you are targeting, tailor your resume based on the type of position you are interested in.
- Otherwise, develop 2-3 other styles that are more “general” – but still geared toward specific industries (e.g. finance, marketing, engineering).

Do I need a cover letter?

- You do not need a cover letter. At a job fair, you are a walking cover letter when you approach employers. Instead your elevator pitch acts a cover letter.

During a Career/Job Fair:

How do I navigate a job fair?

- Each job fair will be set up differently. Usually there will be rows of booths. Be sure to get a map and research which employers you’d like to speak with. You will have more success if you intentionally research each employer that you’re interested in and make a plan to speak with each one. Approaching a booth with vague questions and asking for any job does not show the employer that you’ve researched their company.

When should I arrive?

- The earlier the better. You want enough time to adequately speak with employers.

How do I make a great first impression?

- Business casual or professional business dress attire
- A firm handshake
- Eye contact
- A strong elevator pitch
- Asking 2-3 engaging questions based on your research of the company
- Follow up with a thank you letter

What do I say to a recruiter?

- You want to be prepared with an elevator pitch. Your pitch should be about a minute long. You want to state your name and program, describe the type of work you are interested in and talk about three relevant skills/highlights.
- Additionally, prepare a minimum of three questions based on your research of the company
- Conclude by thanking the recruiter for their time and asking for their business card (or contact information).

What are some types of questions I should ask?

- Ask questions based on your knowledge of the industry, company and types of positions the company is hiring for. Go beyond questions you could answer yourself by looking at the job ad or visiting the company website.
- Sample questions include:
 - What do you like about working at this organization? What keeps you at this organization?
 - What are the traits and skills of people who are most successful within the organization?
 - Why did you choose this career?
 - Does your company hire on a continual basis or just certain times of the year?
 - How long does the hiring process take? What does it consist of?

- How important is relevant work experience when being considered for employment?
- What are the top 3 skills you are looking for in new grads?

How long should I talk to a recruiter?

- 5-10 minutes. You don't want to monopolize their time when other students are waiting in line.

What if I talk to a recruiter and I don't end up liking the job?

- If the job is not for you, that's totally fine. Thank the recruiter for the information and move on.

Is it okay to accept the freebies?

- If the employer offers you some company swag (key chains, water bottles, etc.) you are welcome to keep it. Just make sure you approach the booth because you are genuinely interested in learning more about the company and not for the freebies.

What do I do when I leave a booth?

- When you leave the booth, try to get the recruiter's business card.
- Make notes on the back of the business card or in a note book about the conversation. In particular, think about what was unique about your conversation. You want to keep this information for following up with recruiters and for your continual job search.

After Attending a Career/Job Fair:

How do I follow up?

- For employers you're interested in maintaining contact with, you want to make sure you obtain their contact information before you leave the booth. It is best to follow up within 48 hours with a thank you email. In the message you can also invite them to connect with you on LinkedIn.

How can I be memorable?

A few tips on how to be memorable:

- Talk about something unique but relevant about yourself in your elevator pitch. Don't just give the recruiter a list of your skills, integrate your skills into the conversation using examples.
 - e.g. To an Engineering employer you may want to say "I have always been fascinated by technology and when I was younger I would pull things apart to see how they worked..."
- Send a follow up thank you note (often via email)
 - Recruiters can often talk to hundreds of students a day. You want to attempt to stand out by writing a thank you note. In your thank you note, talk about something unique or specific about your conversation to help the recruiter remember who you are.