

Internship & Career Fair Tips

*To work a fair effectively, strategy, planning
and follow-through are key!*

OFFICE OF CAREER EDUCATION
**BRIDGE FROM
COLLEGE**
to Career Success



Does the thought of attending an internship and career fair create feelings of nervousness, stress, or apprehension? These are common initial reactions to the possibility of attending such an event. Take a look at the following information – it will help you feel prepared, motivated and eager to take advantage of fairs!

Before the Fair

- Find out which employers will be attending the event. You can generally find this information through Handshake if this is an OCE sponsored fair, and find information about the fairs on the Events page on the [Career Launchpad](#)
- Identify the organizations you will want to speak with. Learn about their products, services and any position openings that they have. Company websites are GREAT for this!
- Decide what you are looking for in advance. This may be an internship, full-time position, or a summer job.
- Prepare a résumé targeting the position(s) that you are seeking. Plan to bring several copies with you to the career fair. Need help preparing? Come to the Office of Career Education and pick up a résumé-writing handout, visit our website or have a Career Peer Advisor critique your résumé.
- Create specific questions to ask the employer at the event. Look on the back of this handout for some ideas. You will want to take this list of questions with you to the fair.
- Practice a standard 30-second introduction that you can use to introduce yourself to potential employers. You might begin by giving your name, class year and institution, then tell them your major, what you enjoy doing and ask where there might be a fit within their organization.

At the Fair

The ingredients of a great first impression – a recruiter's perspective:

"A firm handshake and introduction"

"Let me know what your major is and what type of position is interesting to you."

"Good eye contact and speaking clearly."

"The time with each student at a career fair is brief, so a student who can get their point across in about 3 minutes is way ahead of others."

- Take the initiative and introduce yourself to the employers. Employers will respond positively to this direct approach.
- Tell the employer what you're seeking – rather than ask what positions they have available. Employers have a wide variety of positions open at any given time.
- This is a fast-paced event. You will want to meet with many employers and the employers want to talk with as many students as possible. Prioritize your time to meet with all the organizations on your list.
- Keep in mind that employers are using this event to find possible candidates. You may be asked questions about your interest areas and skills, so be prepared to talk about why you would be a good fit for their organization.

- If possible, ask questions of a current employee, gather company literature, and find out who should receive your résumé if you are applying online.
- You'll want to follow-up after the event. Be sure to ask for a business card.

Questions to Ask at the Fair

If you are looking for part-time, internship, freelance, or volunteer opportunities:

- Do you have a formal internship program?
- When is the best time to apply for an internship?
- What experiences might I have as an intern in your company?

- Do you offer both paid internships as well as those for academic credit?
- What academic courses or majors do you look for in potential intern?

If you are looking for a full-time job:

- What are typical entry-level positions for someone with my major, skills and experience? (This should follow a candid discussion of your academics and work experiences.)
- What skills do you look for in candidates?
- What type of previous work experiences do you look for in candidates?
- What's the best way to apply?
- How long does the application process usually take?

Questions You May Be Asked by an Employer

Keep in mind that the employer needs to gather some key facts about you quickly. Expect the questions in the following areas: your availability, the position(s) you are interested in and how focused you are in your search.

- When are you available to begin working?
- Are you interested in full-time or internship opportunities?
- What kind of position are you looking for?
- Which geographic locations are you interested in?
- Are you willing to accept a position outside of Pennsylvania? Mid-Atlantic?
- Why did you stop at our table today?
- May I have a copy of your résumé?

Virtual Internship & Career Fair Tips

While most of the information and tips for in-person Internship & Career Fair remains the same for virtual, there are some ways to prepare for a virtual fair that are different:

- Register early and learn how to best use the software to avoid any confusion on the day of the fair. Test your Internet connection on the day of the fair before it begins to ensure you are ready to go at the start of the fair.
- Create a calendar reminder on your phone or computer.
- Save important documents such as a resume to your desktop for easy access during the fair.
- Create a distraction-free environment. Find a quiet location that is well-lit and tidy. You want to be the focal point of the conversation, not a pile of dirty laundry in the background.
- Dress professionally. While you may be interacting with employers through text-based chats, some employers may want to continue the conversation face to face via Zoom. Prepare for this by at least dressing professionally from the waist up.
- Practice your pitch- more important than ever, it's imperative to have your elevator pitch perfected before a virtual fair. Whether you're typing it or speaking it, you will want to have it polished.
- Collect email addresses to send a thank you note. Employers will not have a business card to hand to you like at an in-person fair. Make sure to ask for the employer's contact information to follow up with a thank you note after the fair.

After the Internship and Career Fair

- Congratulations, you survived! You probably even gathered some nifty souvenirs, and hopefully some business cards!
- Did you get any job leads? If so, follow-up with those employers immediately by sending a professional thank you letter. Add these people to your network by showing your enthusiasm, commitment and persistence. Search for the recruiters on LinkedIn and connect with them and add a quick note to remind them how you met.

Above All Else

Chat with a Career Educator if you feel nervous and need more assistance. Appointments can be scheduled through Handshake. Search in Handshake for upcoming fairs and networking events.

DID YOU KNOW?

Employers can leave a career fair with hundreds of student résumés for a variety of reasons. But, employers report that less than 5% of students follow-up after a fair.

Your Follow-up Makes a Difference!