

## Career Fairs

These fairs provide a valuable opportunity to explore careers, find out about internships and jobs, obtain employer information and establish company contacts. Fairs provide a way to evaluate numerous organizations at one time and in one place and to practice networking.

### Before the Fair

#### Take the event seriously

Adopt a positive attitude and focus on the benefits of attending this event. You can learn a lot from employers about their organizations and job opportunities. It is like an initial interview, so make a great first impression.

#### Define your goals

Goals could include finding a job or internship, gathering information about an organization, making initial contact or practicing communication skills.

#### Create the ideal resume

Make sure your resume is attractive, error-free and markets your skills, experience and education. Bring 10–20 copies.

#### Plan your fair strategy carefully, and be prepared

Research the organizations coming to the fair. These are posted in Handshake. Gathering background information on these organizations will enable you to ask focused questions. Typical questions from recruiters are “What kind of job are you looking for?” and “What do you know about our organization?”

#### Explore all of your options

Have an open mind about which organizations to visit. You may find a great opportunity with an employer you had never considered.

#### Prepare a list of questions

Include questions (at right) regarding available positions, training programs, internship opportunities and career paths.

#### Prepare a self-introduction

Practice a brief but enthusiastic introduction that highlights your strengths, skills, experience and interests.

#### Dress appropriately

Casual attire is acceptable for the career fairs; however, business casual is more appropriate. First impressions count.

(See Interview Attire on page 39).

### At the Fair

#### Allow yourself adequate time

If there is a line at one table, move on and come back.

#### Review the layout and list of organizations

Have a strategy.

#### Prepare for conversation

Prepare several questions that will help you decide if the company is a good match for you.

#### Sell yourself

Be ready to articulate your strengths and competencies and the key features that make you stand out from others.

#### Answer questions directly, politely and concisely

Show confidence. Make eye contact.

#### Take notes about next steps

Representatives may not be able to answer all of your questions. If the person you're speaking with isn't the most appropriate person to follow up with, find out who is. Get business cards or emails when possible.

### Questions You Might Want to Ask at the Career Fair

#### About the organization

- Why is your company a good one to work for?
- Can you describe what you're looking for in a successful candidate?
- What education, experience and skills are required for entry-level positions?
- Are there opportunities for career advancement?
- Describe the usual college graduate entry-level position.
- What do you like the most about your organization?

#### About the industry

- Where are the areas of growth?
- What should a college graduate know about your industry?

#### About the occupation

- What are the entry-level opportunities?
- What are the skills that are most important for a position in this field?
- What advice would you give to someone who wants to break into this field?

### After the Fair

- Make notes about the organization and employers while the experience is fresh in your mind.
- Follow up with thank you letters to recruiters that were particularly helpful and organizations with whom you would like to pursue a relationship. Remind them of your interest and qualifications.

Write down things you've discussed to help you create follow-up notes.

**This is very important!**