

JOB FAIR GUIDELINES

Why Attend a Job Fair?

Face-to-face contact with employers is crucial in a competitive job market. You may send out hundreds of “faceless” resumes or online applications, but direct interaction with employers at a job fair allows you to deliver a “30-second commercial” selling your skills and personal qualities to the employer, ask questions, and make a great impression!

A job fair:

- Is a great opportunity to meet many employers at one time in one location.
- Is an investment in your future. You will most likely not get a job offer at the fair, but you will make some contacts that may benefit you in the future.
- Provides you with a chance to explore career interests, employers, and opportunities that may be new.
- Prompts you to be proactive about your resume writing and interviewing skills.
- Provides you with an opportunity for face-to-face contact with a recruiter and a chance to polish your networking skills.
- Is a great opportunity for situational leadership. Take charge and assert yourself. Get known!

What should I expect at a job fair?

- Each employer is assigned a table where informational displays and promotional materials are set up.
- Employer representatives are present to answer questions and provide information about career opportunities.
- Some employers collect resumes at the fair and ask you to fill out an employment application; some provide business cards, along with company information and ask that resumes be mailed at a later date; some conduct screening interviews

How do I prepare for a job fair?

- Identify the skills and strengths you have to offer the employers.
- Develop a well-written resume. Assemble a professional portfolio (if applicable).
- Familiarize yourself with participating organizations and research those of interest to you.
 - Use the internet, news sources, and career fair materials to learn about the companies you plan to visit. You can impress a recruiter by knowing about his or her company and being able to discuss its’ current situation.
- Prepare a list of questions you want to ask employers.

What do I do at a job fair?

- Dress professionally. Bring a folder or portfolio to hold your materials.
- Take paper and pen with you to write down important details about particular organizations, including names of people who may not have had business cards. Take a few minutes after you leave each table to jot down these notes!

- Take the initiative to approach representatives, rather than waiting for them to approach you.
 - Offer a firm handshake, introduce yourself even if you are wearing a name tag, use good eye contact, and smile. Speak clearly, show enthusiasm, and genuine interest.
 - Prepare a 30-second "commercial" for yourself. Hand the recruiter a copy of your resume and be prepared to expand on it quickly. Share basic information about yourself and your career interests. For example you might say, "Hello, I'm Carrie Jones. I'm a senior here at Wonderful University and I'm majoring in English. I'm very interested in a marketing career. As you can see on my resume, I just completed an internship in the Marketing Division of the ABC Company in Peoria. I've also taken several courses in business marketing. I'm very interested in talking with you about entry-level marketing opportunities with your organization."
- Use time wisely. Determine where employers are located and in what order to visit them. Focus on the companies that you are truly interested in.
- Broaden your focus and include many types of employers. For instance, you may not have considered working for a hospital, but hospitals recruit and hire professionals in many different fields (i.e., management, IT, or health care).
- Be honest and positive.
 - Don't skirt the GPA issue. If you're asked, tell the recruiter your cumulative/semester/major GPA. (Use the one that is the best). If you are not sure, find out. If your GPA is not stellar, explain what the problem was in the past, and how you effectively resolved it. Do not give long excuses.
- Be aware of time demands on employers. Do not monopolize an employer's time. Ask specific questions.
- Asking about salary is considered a mistake at this point. This subject should not be brought up until you are offered the position.
- Collect the organization's information on display.
- Thank the employer. Ask the employer for the next step in the recruitment process and try to obtain a business card for follow-up discussions/correspondence.

What do I do after a job fair?

- Take the initiative to follow-up; don't sit back and wait for employers to call you.
- Send thank you notes to all representatives who interviewed you at the fair (or those you would like to interview with) to remind them of your interest and qualifications.

What should I NOT do at a job fair?

- Do not go to booths with friends. Interact with the recruiters on your own. Make your own positive impression!
- Do not carry your backpack, large purse, or other paraphernalia with you. Carry your resume in a professional-looking portfolio or folder. It will keep your resume neat and handy, and gives you a place to file business cards of recruiters that you meet. Usually you can stow your coat, backpack, or other gear in a coatroom.
- Dress casually. A career fair is a professional activity—perhaps your first contact with a future employer.
- Do not "wing it." Do your homework! Research the companies just as you would for an interview. You'll be able to focus on why you want to work for the organization and what you can do for them.
- Avoid these phrases, "What are you hiring for?" and "Tell me about your company." According to a recent survey of employers, lacking focus/a clear career objective accounts for the most common mistake students make at job fairs. If you aren't focused on a specific career, approach recruiters by telling them what your major is and what types of positions you're interested in.