GET NOTICED AT THE JOB & INTERNSHIP FAIR

Career and job fairs provide students with an opportunity to meet employers from a variety of industries and receive information about the organization and available positions, both full-time and internships. Employers have the opportunity to view a large number of potential candidates and promote their organization, which aids in the pre-screening process and gaining familiarity with potential candidates.

WHAT DO EMPLOYERS EXPECT OF CAREER & JOB FAIR CANDIDATES?
For those seeking full-time employment or an internship:
- Have some knowledge of the company/organization.
- Dress professionally.
- Be prepared to answer questions at the fair.
- Be prepared to ask appropriate questions.
- Follow-through after the fair.

For those seeking information about careers or networking opportunities:
- Be prepared to ask thoughtful and appropriate questions.
- Have an idea of the type of industry and/or position you might be seeking.
- Be prepared to answer questions about your interests, major, and/or skills.

PREPARATION IS KEY IN MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR FAIR EXPERIENCE!

Resume: If you do not have a resume already prepared, be sure to have one written and reviewed prior to attending the fair. (Career Services provides workshops on Resume Writing and will critique resumes for you.) Many employers will collect resumes, indicating those candidates with whom they have met and would like to consider further. Have a resume that is clear, concise (one page is preferred), and easy to read within a short amount of time. Bring sufficient copies to provide to each employer in which you are interested.

Attire: Many employers consider business casual appropriate attire for a career fair. However, if you are seeking a full-time position or if interviews are being conducted at the fair, business professional attire (i.e. a suit) should be worn. It is better to err on the professional side. This is your chance to make a great first impression!

Research: Review information about the fair and employers that are scheduled to attend. Many will have links to web sites, a list of the positions available within the organization, and contact information.

Plan Your Strategy: After reviewing the list of employers, make a list of those you intend to visit by order of priority, especially if you have a limited amount of time at
the fair. Determine “What is my objective at the fair?” Are you attending to visit with employers about potential internship positions? Are you interested in hearing about organizations and the positions they may have available for someone with your interests and background? What do you hope to accomplish at the fair?

**Questions:** Prepare a list of questions: Ask about career opportunities, specific position openings for which you might be qualified, and the organization. **Do not** ask questions such as “So, what do you do?” or “Do you have any jobs?”

**Promotion:** Be prepared to talk about your career interest areas, strengths, educational and work background.

**Items to Bring:**
- Resumes (clear, clean copies)
- Pens, pencils
- Notepad
- List of employers to target at fair and List of prepared questions
- Other information not provided on resume (in the event you need to complete an application)
- Professional Portfolio with samples of work (if appropriate)
- Copy of Transcripts * could be requested by a company
- References * that interviews candidates at the fair

**AT THE FAIR**
- When you arrive, view the lay out of the fair, noting the location of employers with whom you wish to meet. You will have the ability to plan your strategy for visiting with your top priority employers, making the best use of your time.
- Be patient. There may be some employers that will have a line of candidates waiting to visit with them. You may decide to visit with another employer and come back to this one later or use this time to review the company literature (as well as your list of questions!), and …
- Listen. While waiting in line, you will have a great opportunity to listen to employers. You can hear what questions other candidates are asking, and the employer responses to these questions, both positive and negative.
- Professionalism. Introduce yourself and use a firm handshake and genuine smile to begin the conversation. Be sure not to interrupt others that might be talking with an employer.
- Answer questions directly and concisely. The conversation should be two-sided, with both parties asking questions and providing information.
- Ask intelligent, well thought out questions from the list you have prepared. You may think of additional questions as you circulate through the fair.
- Make notes. You will be able to use these after the fair to assess your interest in certain organizations or compare organizations.
- Be positive. Even if an employer doesn’t sound like a future alternative for you, be gracious and thank them for their time.
- Collect business cards and company literature so you can use these to do further research or send an application or Thank You note after the fair.
• Network. You might have a specific career interest area or geographic preference. Some organizations may be able to refer you to a related department, division or location. Keep an open mind while you talk to various individuals; the employers as well as fellow career fair attendees may be able to provide you with resources, ideas and contacts.

AFTER THE FAIR
• Send Thank You’s in a timely manner. Mention how much you appreciated the time he or she took to visit with you and answer questions. Mention your interest in working for them, if appropriate.
• If an employer has asked you to complete an application, send transcripts or contact them, be sure to do so in a timely manner. Failure to follow-through will most likely eliminate you from the potential candidate pool.

WAYS to MAKE an UNFAVORABLE IMPRESSION
• Unprofessional/inappropriate attire
• Questions about salary
• Lack of goals or career direction
• Lack of preparation of questions, asking no questions
• Lack of enthusiasm or sincere interest in a company
• Taking the “Freebies” and walking away
• Poor communication skills (lack of eye contact, interrupting others, weak handshake)
• Waiting until the end of the fair to arrive

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND
• Fairs only offer the opportunity for you to present yourself to potential employers as well as the opportunity for you to “interview” them!
• Rarely, if ever, are employers going to extend an offer at a career fair. Do not expect it!

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS YOU MAY WISH TO ASK
Questions may range from specifics about the organizations to work tasks of typical positions. Determine, “what do I need to know about this employer/organization to help me determine if I am interested in them or if they offer the types of positions in which I have an interest?”

• What types of positions are available within your organization in the ________ area?
• Can you tell me what characteristics your most successful sales representatives have?
• What is the hiring process for your associates/interns?
• What types of training are provided for new employees?
• Is there an application I need to complete in order to apply for this position?
• What types of majors do you traditionally hire for your _____ positions?
• If I have additional questions, whom may I contact?

REMEMBER, YOU ONLY GET ONE CHANCE TO MAKE A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION!