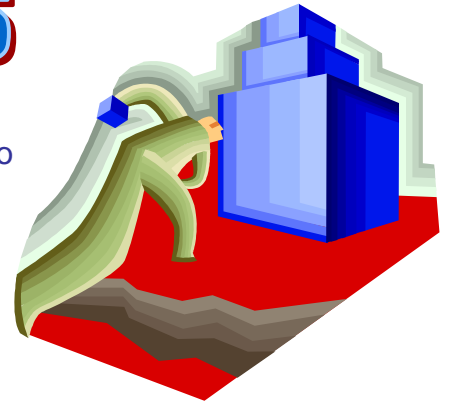


Career Fair Strategies



What is a career fair?

A career fair is an opportunity for company representatives to meet informally with candidates to tell them about their organization and the job opportunities that may be available currently or in the near future. Each company has a booth with a display and usually handouts about the company, its products and services. This is an excellent way to find out about companies, especially ones that are unfamiliar to you.

Who should attend a career fair?

Career Fairs can be helpful to all students—freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors as well as alumni. **Explore your options!**

Freshmen: Not sure about a major or why you should go to college? Visit the employers at a career fair to find out what majors are in demand and what jobs are available in those majors. Also, many employers have part-time or summer jobs for college students and this is a good way to get your foot in the door with a company.

Sophomores: Choosing a degree program, a double-major or a minor? Talking to employer representatives can give you insight into planning your academic program. Part-time, summer or entry-level internships may also be available.

Juniors: Don't miss out on the opportunity to talk with professionals in your field of interest. Internships are an important part of your college experience and this is an excellent way to impress employers. You may even find a mentor!

Seniors: This is your chance to test the market. Find out about jobs and how to apply. What will make you a competitive applicant and how you can tailor your resume and cover letter to suit the company. Perhaps, you can even arrange an interview.

How should I prepare for a career fair?

- Research, research, research! Check the list of companies that will be attending the fair and research the ones that interest you.
- Go to their web site and visit the library to read any employer literature.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask the representatives.
- Know yourself. Try to identify specific examples where you have demonstrated your skills.
- Be able to market yourself as a strong candidate.
- Be able to tell them why you want to work for their company
- Fine tune your resume and bring several copies to distribute.

What should I do during the career fair?

Make a good first impression!

- Be sure to make eye contact immediately when introducing yourself

- Give a firm handshake to get you off to a good start.
- Take notice of the representative's name and remember it.
- Smile. ☺ Be polite and enthusiastic.
- Dress professionally. Wear a suit if possible.



Watch your body language.

- It can often speak louder than the spoken word
- Watch out for nervous habits; do not fidget or play with your hair.
- Do not rock from side to side.
- Focus on the representative; do not look around when speaking or being spoken to.
- Always carry mints; do not chew gum. Do not smoke before the event.

Communication is critical!

- Listen carefully to what the representative has to say. Avoid words such as: *'ya know, like, um.*
- Show confidence in yourself and your abilities.
- Be articulate and market yourself.
- Offer a resume, if you have a professional one; otherwise, offer to send it.
- Ask for a business card so you can follow up with the representative



Explore all your options

- Speak with employers and graduate schools that you had not considered before.
- Take the initiative and engage in meaningful conversations with representatives.
- Gather as much information as you can about companies and career fields.

What should I do after the Career Fair?

- Mailing a thank you letter is not only appropriate, it can also bring attention to your name and reinforce your relationship with the representative.
- You may send a targeted or updated resume with your thank you letter.
- You may call to make sure that your application has been received and is complete.
- When calling, be prepared and know what you are going to say. (See *Telephone Skills*)

What should I say to an employer representative?

- First and foremost, be yourself.
- Introduce yourself and establish rapport with the representatives.

- Listen carefully to their answers.
- Be courteous and thank them before leaving.

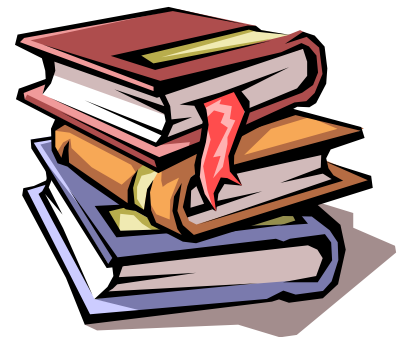
Do not read directly from these lists of questions.

If you are well prepared, you can truly be yourself.



Questions to ask employer representatives

1. How many people are employed with your company?
2. What goals does your company have for 20XX?
3. What types of entry-level positions exist within your company?
4. How many employees are in my area of interest _____?
5. Does your company hire on a continual basis or just at certain times of the year?
6. How long does the hiring process take?
7. What does your company consider to be the most important qualities in an employee?
8. Are graduate degrees important? If yes, in what areas?
9. What courses do you suggest in order to be a successful candidate?
10. Is there a GPA requirement in your recruiting process?
11. What personality traits are important for success in your company?
12. As an entry-level employee, what can I expect to be doing in 2-5 years from now?
13. What made you choose this company?
14. How long have you been with the company?
15. What goals has your company accomplished for which you are especially proud?
16. How many years does an entry-level employee typically stay with the company?
17. What percent of applicants are eventually hired?
18. What is the retention rate for the company?
19. How much travel is associated with the position?
20. Do you expect your employees to relocate?



Questions to ask graduate school representatives

1. How many students are in the department?
2. How many professors are in the department?
3. What is the student-faculty ratio?
4. How accessible are professors to students?
5. What courses should I take in order to be better prepared for graduate school?
6. What is the GPA cut-off for the department?
7. What graduate admission's test is required for this department?
8. What is unique about your graduate program?
9. What types of employment opportunities do graduates find?
10. What type of financial aid is available?
11. What is the retention rate of your graduate school?

12. What types of assistantships are available?
13. Can I pursue a graduate degree part-time, or is full-time attendance expected?
14. What personal attributes would make me a successful student?
15. What is the application process like?