



Navigating a Career Fair

A career fair, whether in-person or virtual, is an excellent event for students to make connections with recruiters and companies, to learn more about what companies are looking for in candidates, and to find out about available internships and full-time positions. For students new to the campus recruitment process, this is a valuable opportunity to practice your elevator pitch, network, and explore career paths worth pursuing.

BEFORE

- ☞ Research companies (internet search, company website, social media, press releases, [Career Insider](#), [Mergent Intellect](#), and [IBISWorld](#)) so you clarify which companies interest you most and so you can articulate your genuine interest.
- ☞ Create a game plan for the companies you've targeted. [UMass Handshake](#) lists all the companies, in advance, that are attending and provides company information numerous related career fairs whether they take place on campus or through a virtual career fair platform.
- ☞ Write each targeted company on an index card and jot down key details about the company, as well as how you believe you can contribute to it. (*This is part of your own research and preparation, and should not be conducted in front of a recruiter*).
- ☞ Practice your elevator pitch, including reasons why you are interested in the targeted company.
- ☞ Construct a professional resume using [The Isenberg Resume: A How-to Guide](#). Have your final resume reviewed two weeks prior to the career fair.
- ☞ Plan your professional business outfit (see Chase Career Center's online [Dress for Success](#) guide).
- ☞ Prepare specific questions you want to ask each company based on your company research. Examples could include:
 - *What positions are you looking for right now? Why you are interested in such positions?*
 - *What do you like best about working at company X?*
 - *What kinds of projects would a new hire be working on in the first couple of months?*
 - *Could you share examples of how interns/new hires have contributed to the team?*
- ☞ Prepare comments you want to share with each recruiter. Recruiters meet many of students in a day, so stand out by highlighting:
 - *A significant experience or project that you have completed*
 - *Why you are driven to learn at Isenberg or pursuing your specific career interest*
 - *Your three most significant traits and skills that will be of value to an employer*
 - *Why you are curious about the company and why you are interested in working there*



**BEFORE
VIRTUAL**

- ☞ Download the virtual career fair app indicated on UMass Handshake to your devices. The app will allow you to research attending employers, to sign up for appointments, to submit your electronic resume, and to meet with recruiters the day of the event.
- ☞ Set one-to-one appointments with company recruiters soon after event registration starts. There will be a limit to the number of appointments a candidate can see, so make sure to commit to appointments with companies you have a sincere interest in.
- ☞ The career fair app will request you to upload a current all-purpose resume that will be available to all employers you set an appointment with.
- ☞ Pay attention to room lighting and location, tech readiness (Wi-Fi access, contacts for tech support)
- ☞ Prepare specific questions you want to ask each company based on your company research. An example could include:
 - *How do you structure your remote work environment and encourage digital camaraderie and collaboration?*

**BEFORE
IN
PERSON**

- ☞ Create your priority list of companies to talk to. *(At the fair, do not start with your highest priority company; instead practice with other companies first).*
- ☞ Print your resume on high quality resume paper and store your copies neatly in a folder or padfolio. Make sure to bring enough resumes to provide each employer on your priority list, plus 10 more *(i.e. if you've targeted 10 companies, bring 20 resumes).*



DURING	☞ Login to the virtual meeting ten minutes before the appointment.
	☞ You may need your phone as a back-up device to use to connect to the virtual event, so keep it nearby, by on silent mode.
	☞ Since your career fair appointments are set based on the preset conference schedule, there is no busy lunch hour concern for a virtual fair.
	☞ Use a neutral, distraction free background/room setting, good lighting and position yourself close to the camera with a shoulder and above headshot.
	☞ Prior to end of virtual career fair appointment, request the interviewers full name and email address.
	☞ Since your career fair appointments are set based on the preset conference schedule, there is no busy lunch hour concern for a virtual fair.

DURING IN PERSON	☞ Arrive early. Pick-up the floor plan at the registration table, locate your top companies, and map out your route.
	☞ Make sure your phone is turned off or on silent mode and out of sight.
	☞ Rehearse your elevator pitch and networking skills with a lower priority company before approaching your higher priority companies.
	☞ Timing matters! The lunch hour is often the busiest with one recruiter (if there are multiple) breaking for lunch. Also, most students will show up during that time period. Try to avoid the last hour of a fair, if you can; recruiters can be tired by then.
	☞ Offer a firm handshake, make eye contact, smile, and show your personality.
	☞ Provide each recruiter with your resume and discuss your accomplishments. Don't simply leave your resume on the employer's table.
	☞ Listen to how other attendees talk to the recruiters; you might learn something.
	☞ Don't interrupt another student talking with a recruiter. Be mindful that other students want a chance to speak with the recruiters too, so watch your own time. If the conversation is going well, you can tell the recruiter: <i>"I am mindful of other students who want to speak with you and I would like to continue this conversation at another time. May I follow-up with you by email?"</i>
	☞ Don't leave an employer's table until you've asked for their business card, so you have the recruiter's correct name spelling and contact information.
☞ After visiting each table, but out of sight from the recruiters, jot down notes about who you met and any important information you discussed. As an alternative, you can jot down your notes immediately after attending the career fair.	



AFTER

- ☞ Send thank you notes via email or LinkedIn message within 1-2 days of the career fair to each recruiter you met. Make the notes personal and reference something specific that you discussed.
- ☞ Complete any online applications, if companies require them.
- ☞ Further investigate the companies you are most interested in, and make a detailed, chronological action plan pursue opportunities with those companies.