

Making a Job/Career Fair Work for You

As a candidate, you will find that attending job/career fairs is an important and efficient method of making in-person contact with organizations already of interest to you and of connecting to other companies you may discover at the fair.

Learn Who's Coming Ahead of Time

Generally, you can learn the names of attending employers via the "Fairs" tab in Handshake. Narrow the list and begin to research their products/services and hiring needs.

Contact Employers of Special Interest Before the Fair

Send a focused letter/email to all companies you will be targeting expressing your interest along with a resume targeted toward their needs. Point out that you are looking forward to meeting them at the fair.

Prepare a 30-Second Summary of Your Qualifications

Job/career fairs offer only brief contact with organizations, so be prepared to make the most of your time. Prepare an interesting verbal summary of your background, achievements, and career interests to make a strong and professional first impression.

Dress the Part

The first impression you create is critical, so dress in a conservative, professionally-tailored, well-pressed business suit. How you look will play a big part in determining employer interest. Be sure to turn off your phone!

Arrive Early and Plan to Stay Late

Lines may be long; get there when the fair begins and plan to stay a while. Be prepared to talk about what you have to offer and want to do. Don't just rush in and drop off your resume without having a conversation.

Take the Right Things with You

Take along an ample supply of resumes; they are important even with companies you have contacted ahead of time. Carry an attractive pen, note pad, etc.

Know What You Are Going to Ask

Try to have one or two questions in mind for each target employer. The questions should reflect both your interests and the research you have done on the employer. Do not ask at this point about salary or benefits.

Learn What's Going to Happen Next

As you leave each employer, request the representative's business card, learn what happens next in the hiring process and ask what, if anything, you should do to advance your candidacy.

Follow-Up

Within 24 hours, make sure you send a follow-up thank you note or email to each recruiter you spoke with at the fair.

Refer to the **NACE Career Ready Skills** handout to learn more about the skills employers are looking for in applicants.