

Career & Internship Fair Prep Guide

WHAT TO EXPECT:

Career and internship fairs provide candidates with an opportunity to meet employers from a variety of industries and receive first-hand information about the organization and available positions. These fairs allow employers the opportunity to view a large number of potential candidates, which aids in the pre-screening process.

EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS OF YOU:

- Knowledge of the company/organization
- [Professional dress](#)
- Ability to answer questions at the fair
- Ability to ask appropriate questions
- Follow up after the fair

WHAT TO BRING:

- [Resumes](#) (on resume paper)
- Pens, pencils
- Padfolio/Professional folder
- List of employers to meet at fair
- List of prepared questions
- [Professional portfolio](#) with samples of work (if appropriate)

PREPARATION:

Resume: If you do not have a resume already prepared, be sure to have one written and reviewed prior to attending a career fair. Some employers will collect resumes and some will refer you to their online application. Have a resume that is clear, concise (one page is preferred), easy to review by a reader within a short amount of time. Be sure you have enough copies for the number of companies you wish to visit and a few extras. Refer to our [Resume Guide](#) for more information.

Attire: Many employers expect business professional attire for a career fair. If interviews are being conducted at the fair, business suits should be worn. It is better to err on the professional side. SNC requires professional attire at on-campus fairs. See the Career & Professional Development Pinterest page for examples of professional outfits.

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, 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. Start out by networking with a company mid-way through your prioritized list. Once comfortable, visit your top priority employer(s). This will help you utilize your time efficiently and put your best foot forward.

Network: Be prepared to talk about your career interest areas, strengths, educational and work background. Utilize your Elevator Pitch to begin conversations.

Questions: Prepare a list of questions. Questions may range from specifics about the organizations to work tasks of typical positions. Based on your research, determine what you need to learn about the employer to decide if you are interested.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK THE EMPLOYER:

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

AT THE FAIR:

- When you arrive, view the layout of the fair, noting the location of employers you want to meet. Plan your strategy for visiting with your top priority employers, making the best use of your time.
- Be patient. Some employers will have a line of candidates waiting to visit with them. You may visit with another employer and come back later or use this time to review the company literature as well as your questions.
- Listen. While waiting in line, you will have the opportunity to listen to employers. You can hear what questions other candidates are asking and the responses to these questions.
- Act professionally. Introduce yourself and use a firm handshake and genuine smile to begin the conversation. Do not interrupt others that are in conversation.
- Answer questions directly and concisely. The conversation should be two-sided, with both parties asking questions and providing information.
- Ask well-thought out questions from the list you prepared. You may think of additional questions as you circulate through the fair.
- Take 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 good fit for you, be gracious and thank them for their time.
- Collect business cards and company literature. You will be able to use these to do further research as well as to send an application or thank you note after the fair.
- [Network](#). Keep an open mind while you talk to employers, as they may be able to provide you with resources, ideas and contacts.

AFTER THE FAIR:

- Send a [thank you note](#) within 2 business days via e-mail, LinkedIn, or mail.
- If an employer has asked you to complete an application, send transcripts (or other materials) or contact them, be sure to do so within 2 business days. Failure to follow-through will most likely eliminate you from the candidate pool.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

- You get only one chance to make a great first impression!
- Rarely, if ever, are employers going to extend an offer at a career fair. Do not expect it!
- Career fairs offer the opportunity to present yourself to potential employers, and the opportunity for you to interview them!
- Be confident!

THINGS TO AVOID:

- Unprofessional/inappropriate attire
- Not asking the employer any questions
- Questions about salary
- Lack of goals or career direction, preparation of questions, enthusiasm or interest in a company
- Taking the freebies and walking away
- Poor communication skills (eye contact, speech, interrupting others, weak handshake)
- Waiting until the end of the fair to arrive