

Virtual Career Fair Guide

What is a virtual career fair?

A virtual career fair is just like an in-person career fair except it is online! It is a virtual opportunity to meet interesting companies looking to hire students like you. The University Career Center will be hosting all virtual career fairs through Handshake this semester. *Please access Handshake through the Google Chrome browser.*

How does it work?

First, make sure that your Handshake account is active and that you have logged in prior to the fair. To do this, go to utsa.joinhandshake.com and log in with your abc123 and passphrase, which is the same as your login for ASAP. Please note that in order to attend, you must **register** in advance and schedule individual and/or group sessions with companies of your choice. To register, go to Handshake- Events- Register, and then you will be able to see a list of participating companies. For more details, review [Handshake's Guide to Attending a Virtual Fair](#).

What should I do *before* the fair?

1. **Sign up early and complete your Handshake profile!**

The sooner you register for the virtual event the better! Signing up early allows you to receive notifications and gives you time to update your Handshake profile. It is highly recommended to register 2-3 weeks in advance and make sure that your profile information is up to date. Employers will be reviewing your profile as you schedule sessions with them and this is the only way for them to receive your contact information. Once you register, you will see the list of employers and you can start to explore whom you would like to connect with on the day of the fair.

2. **Research Participating Organizations**

Researching participating companies not only allows you to gain valuable information about the company but also shows the employer your genuine interest in the career opportunities they provide.

How do I go about researching companies?

- First: Determine which companies speak to your interest.**
For every virtual career fair there is a list of employers that will attend. You can view this list by going onto Handshake, clicking the events tab, and selecting the event.

- Second: Review the company's job postings on Handshake.**
Reviewing their job postings can give you an insight into the positions they are looking to hire during the career fair. This can help you determine who to chat with to optimize your time during the career fair.

- Third: Create questions to ask employers**
A few things to consider as you do research is:
 - What are the company's short/long term goals?
 - What are they known for?
 - What are the services/products/programs the company provides?
 - Who are its competitors?

As you do research, you can begin to see if the organization is a place you see yourself working and in turn. It will also allow you to create questions to ask employers during interviews.

3. **Select times to chat with employers**

Once you have registered for the event in Handshake, you will be able to view and sign up for available individual and group sessions with employers. Click the *Available Sessions* tab in the upper-left of the page, below the fair title and date/time. Then select the type and time of session that you would like to participate in. For additional details, review [Signing Up for & Managing Virtual Fair Sessions](#).

4. **Prepare your resume**

Your resume is key to landing an interview! It serves as a snapshot of the skills you bring to the table. It should resemble your qualities, experiences, strengths and successes. Resumes can be challenging to write but the UTSA University Career Center has many resources that can help you in the process.

- [Resume Samples](#) are available on the Career Center Resource page.

- Submit your resume on [Vmock](#) and receive instant feedback.
- Schedule a virtual appointment with a career counselor via [Handshake](#) by clicking the career center tab.
- Attend a virtual drop in on Tuesday or Wednesday from 3-6 pm via Handshake and get a 15-20 minute review of your resume.

5. Prepare your introduction/pitch

This should be a 30-second introduction of yourself, including your major, year of study, and the position you're interested in applying for. For instance, "Hi my name is Tyra, I am Senior studying Digital Communication, and I am looking for a full-time position in your communications department." This is also a great time to connect with the recruiter on common interests related to the position such as skills and experiences.

6. Create a list of questions

Spend some time creating a list of questions and type them out in advance. This way you can copy and paste them into the chat box and keep the conversation moving.

What should I do *during* the fair?

Be Organized & Professional

On the day of the virtual fair, you will be able to join sessions via the *Your Sessions* tab in the fair. You will see a banner on your dashboard that will take you directly there. Note that you must be signed up for the session at least one minute prior to the session start in order to join. Each session will be similar to a Zoom meeting where you will have the opportunity to turn your camera and audio on/off and utilize the chat function. During sessions, remember to refer to the employer by Mr. or Ms. and make sure your email address is your first and last name.

Dress Appropriately

Even for virtual career fair events, it is important to show the best version of you. The career fair is a smart business casual event so participants should dress accordingly. This means wearing attire such as a collared or button down shirt, blouse, or casual blazer. Dressing professionally from head to toe also boosts your confidence!

Be in a distraction and noise free space

Find a place in your dwelling that is quiet and well lit. Inform family members in advance that you will be participating in a virtual career fair to avoid interruptions. Avoid sitting in the dark and/or turning off your camera. Recruiters want to connect with you and seeing your face increases that level of connection drastically.

Test your internet and video connections

Before the event, test your internet connection to ensure it is stable. Give yourself time to troubleshoot in case you run into any technology or connectivity issues. Check your audio and camera as well to make sure employers will be able to see and hear you clearly. It is always good to have a back-up plan in case something happens with your laptop or the connection. Consider downloading the Handshake app on your phone as a backup. If you need further support, visit [Handshake-Troubleshooting](#).

Demonstrate strong body language through your video

It is important for you and the recruiter to see each other to bridge that human connection. When it is your turn to speak, look into the camera. When the other person is speaking, look at the screen. Remember to smile and speak clearly and concisely. Placing an arrow pointing toward your camera can help you to remember to look directly into the camera when you are speaking.

Take Notes

Ask for the recruiter for their contact information so you can follow-up. Within 24-48 hours, send them a note or email, thanking them for their time and reiterating your interest. This is a great way to stand out as a candidate and show an employer how personable you are.

For additional event resources, visit the [Handshake Virtual Fair Launch Kit - Fall 2020](#)