



### Why Attend a Career Fair

A career fair is a great opportunity to meet with many employers in one place. Similar to a resource fair, employers are set up at booths and students walk around to speak with the employers. The MSU Career Services Network hosts over 12 career fairs every year for students of all years and majors. At a career fair, you can learn about part-time jobs, full-time jobs, internships, and graduate or professional school programs. Whether you are actively searching or want to meet employers in your field of interest, a career fair is a great place to make these important connections

## 1

### Identify Goals

Why are you going to the career fair? What do you hope will happen? Whether you are hoping to make a good impression for a job or internship, learn more about the company, or make connections, it is important to identify your interests and goals for the fair.

## 2

### Research Employers

Career fairs can have a few employers or hundreds of employers in attendance. It is important to identify which employers you are most interested in speaking to before attending. You can find the list of employers attending all of our career fairs on Handshake. Search the "Events" tab for a full list. Click the name of the fair for a list of registered employers and the opportunities they have available.

Then, make sure you do some research on the employer. Visit their company website or social media pages to learn more about the organization, their culture, and the type of work they do.

## 3

### Prepare Materials and Attire

There are many things you can do to personally prepare yourself for a career fair.

- **Create or update your resume.** Highlight your skills and experiences relevant to the positions you are seeking. You will want to bring a hard copy of your resume for every employer you hope to meet. Check out our website for information on creating a resume and have it reviewed by a member of our team.
- **Choose your attire.** You want to dress to impress. In many fields, this means a professional suit, whereas for others, this may mean business casual. Check out our resource on professional dress.
- **Craft your elevator pitch.** An elevator pitch is used to introduce yourself to an employer. This pitch should be 30-60 seconds. Make sure you practice your pitch before the fair. Use our elevator pitch guide to help craft your pitch.



### 1 Be Confident and Intentional

When you arrive at the career fair, you will check in and be provided a map showing all of the employers in attendance. Take a minute to look over the map and prepare your route to ensure you are able to talk with all of the employers of interest to you. You may find that some employers have long lines. It is ok to wait or to circle back to speak with them later.

As you approach the booth, be confident and show enthusiasm. Smile, look the employer in the eye, and give a firm handshake. Then introduce yourself using your elevator pitch. Offer a copy of your resume to each employer.

### 2 Give Yourself Time

Career fairs can feel a little overwhelming. It is important to give yourself time to speak with each employer of interest and have time to regroup between employers. Use the time in between to take and review notes. It is ok, even encouraged, to bring a notebook or padfolio to write down questions or responses from employers.

### 3 Ask Questions

Prepare a list of questions for each employer before attending the fair. It is ok to write these questions down in a notebook or padfolio and review before approaching the booth. Asking questions shows that you have done your research and are excited to learn more about their organization and opportunities. Find a list of good sample questions to ask employers in the box to the right.

→ Tip: Show you have done your research! Don't ask questions you could easily find the answer to on their website or social media.

### 4 Gather Contact Information

At the end of each interaction, find out how to follow up with the employer. ask for a business card or contact information. Once you leave the booth, jot down some notes about your interaction on the back of the business card or in a notebook. Make sure to note any next steps required to apply or how you will follow up with that employer.

#### SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- Can you tell me about your training program?
- What are the characteristics of an ideal candidate?
- What career paths are typical or available in this company?
- I saw the posting for (open role) on your website. Can you tell me more about (responsibility)?
- Does this organization have any identity or affinity groups? How do you support different identities?
- What advice would you give someone who wants to break into this industry?
- What do you like most about working for this organization?
- I noticed you currently don't have any open (role type). Do you foresee hiring in this area in the near future?
- I saw photos of (event) on the organization's Instagram. Can you tell me more about these types of programs or opportunities?
- What does the hiring process look like?



### Get Organized

You likely met representatives from many different organizations at the career fair. Take some time after to organize the information you gathered. Create a spreadsheet or document to keep track of who you spoke with, what instructions they gave you for follow up, and any other pertinent information you learned about their organization or openings.



### Apply

Follow whatever instructions the employer gave you to apply for open roles. Whether they told you to apply on the company website, Handshake, or send a copy of your resume to an email address, make sure you follow the steps provided. Failing to follow the steps in a timely manner is a sure way to not be considered for a position.



### Follow Up

Send a thank you email to all of the recruiters you met within a day or two of the career fair. Remember that these recruiters are often attending multiple career fairs in a week, so make sure you mention where you met them and highlight one or two things from your conversation. Check out our Thank You Guide for more information and an example letter.



### Prepare for Interviews

Some employers might hold interviews the day or week after a career fair, so you need to be prepared at any time. Make any needed updates to your LinkedIn and resume to prepare for an interview as well. Check out some additional interview preparation tips in the box on the right.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

YOU CAN PRACTICE YOUR INTERVIEW SKILLS ONLINE AT ANY TIME! [INTERVIEWSTREAM](#) IS A FREE ONLINE TOOL FOR ALL MSU STUDENTS THAT ALLOWS YOU TO SELECT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PRACTICE BY RECORDING A VIDEO OF YOUR RESPONSES.

## PREPARE FOR INTERVIEWS

### Review the Job Posting

Oftentimes, questions for the interview are based on keywords from the job posting.

If you applied for a specific position, review the posting before your interview to get an idea of the questions that might be asked. Look specifically at the skills they are seeking and the qualifications.

### Practice PARK Stories

Many questions will likely be behavioral-based. These are questions that ask you to reflect on a specific experience you have had in the past. To answer these questions, you will use PARK or STAR stories. Use the skills you identified to come up with PARK stories using [this handout](#).

### Research the Organization

You should have done some research on the organization before the career fair, but you should do a little more digging before an interview. In addition to their website and social media, look at information shared on websites like Glassdoor that include employee reviews. Also take a look at resources like Google News to see what big things are happening in the organization or industry. Use this research to prepare your questions.