

guide to

CAREER FAIRS



WHY ATTEND A CAREER FAIR?

- To discover job opportunities
- To research organizations and industries
- To explore potential careers
- To receive feedback on your résumé
- To engage with recruiters about opportunities
- To increase your odds of getting an interview
- To network with professionals

PREPARE AHEAD OF TIME

Get your toolkit ready. You will want to prepare your job search tools including updating your résumé, creating or enhancing your Handshake and LinkedIn profiles, and practicing interviews. Recruiters will engage with hundreds of students and alumni at a career fair, so it is vital that all of these elements are in top form and represent you well. Connect with the [MU Career Center](#) or your [school/college's career services office](#) for a consultation to make sure you are ready.

Search for upcoming fairs. Step outside of your comfort zone and participate in fairs that are open to all MU students and alumni of all majors. Search for upcoming events on [HireMizzouTigers.com](#) (Handshake).

Dress for success. Look professional by wearing business attire. It is better to be overdressed rather than underdressed for a fair. A general rule is to keep clothing, jewelry and hairstyles simple and straightforward. Consider attire such as solid, neutral tones in black, blue, and gray. [Truman's Closet](#) is a free service for all Mizzou students to borrow professional attire.

What to bring. Though most employers encourage you to apply online, it is still good practice to bring copies of your resume in a professional padfolio or folder. Take business cards and company literature at the fair.

RESEARCH EMPLOYERS

Research organizations. Review the fair's employer list and research organizations that are of interest. Learn about organizations' history, mission, culture/structure, professional development opportunities, locations, benefits packages, and company reviews.

Where can I research employers who are attending the fair?

- [HireMizzouTigers.com](#), powered by Handshake
- Current Employees
- Your Professors
- Organization Websites
- Trade Journals (i.e., Wall Street Journal, Fortune, Chronicle of Philanthropy)
- LinkedIn & other social media
- Glassdoor

Apply for positions. Take the initiative and apply for any internships, co-ops or part-time/full-time jobs before the fair. The more you know about an organization and its opportunities, the more you will be prepared to ask questions, have meaningful conversations, and show your genuine interest in their organization.



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AT THE FAIR

Practice and use your elevator pitch. A great strategy for introducing yourself is by using a 30 to 60-second elevator pitch, which highlights the important facts about you that a recruiter should know. Before the fair, share your opening statement with a friend or colleague and get their feedback. Remember to practice your pitch until it feels comfortable!

Your pitch should include:

- Your name, year in school, major
- Opportunities you are seeking
- Relevant experience
- Knowledge of the organization
- Something that makes you stand out

Example:

“Good afternoon! My name is Sample Student, and I am a senior graduating in May with a degree in International Studies. I recently spent a semester abroad in Spain, and I am looking for a position where I can use my fluency in Spanish and build upon my leadership skills in a corporate setting.”

Answer and ask questions. Prepare for employer interactions as you would any other job interview. Practice answering questions that might be asked of you and strategize ways to stand out. Be confident—if you don't seem sure of your qualifications neither will recruiters. Resources can be found at

<http://career.missouri.edu/resumes-interviews>. You can practice at <https://missouri.biginterview.com/>.

QUESTIONS EMPLOYERS MIGHT ASK YOU

Tell me about yourself.

Why are you interested in this organization/position?

What are your qualifications and relevant experiences?

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK EMPLOYERS

What qualities and background are you looking for in employees?

What courses would you recommend someone take before being hired as a _____?

What does the application process look like for your organization?

What does the interview process and format look like for your organization?

May I have your contact information for reference and to contact you in the future?

TIPS

The Walkabout Strategy. When you first arrive, walk around the entire room to get a feel for the layout of the fair. If you approach a booth where a recruiter is already with a student, don't immediately get into line. Instead, take a few steps back and listen to the current conversation to observe the recruiter in action with another student. As you move about the room and make eye contact with recruiters, go over and introduce yourself. You may not be familiar with the organization but it may be a great opportunity to start getting to know the company/recruiter. You never know what opportunities could come from a conversation with a recruiter.

Go alone. Though friends may provide support, avoid traveling in groups and becoming distracted.

Be conscientious. Keep in mind that there may be other students waiting—keep conversations brief, but don't cut the recruiter off. Let the conversation end naturally.

Go early. Some recruiters leave as early as a half hour before the event is scheduled to end.

Connect with the recruiter. Recruiters see hundreds of students the day of the career fair. Remember, they are people, too – ask them how they like being a recruiter, how travel is going, etc.

Follow up. Write thank you messages, connect with recruiters on LinkedIn, and create a system to keep track of contacts. Follow their instructions and apply to positions in which you are interested.

next steps:

Talk with a Career Specialist for one-on-one assistance: <https://career.missouri.edu/connect>
Check out more resources at <https://career.missouri.edu> > Resources tab