

guide to

# VIRTUAL CAREER FAIRS



## WHY ATTEND A VIRTUAL 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 virtual 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 [academic unit'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 across campus to develop effective virtual recruitment skills as most are **open to all MU students and alumni of all majors**. Search for upcoming events on [HireMizzouTigers.com](https://www.hiremizzoutigers.com), powered by Handshake.

### *Check the tech: make sure all the logistics are ready*

- Review your college's virtual career fair platform and ensure that you have the required equipment (cell phone, tablet, laptop, or computer with webcam and microphone) and download any software, applications, or programs needed to participate
- Study and familiarize yourself with the virtual career fair platform. Read any supporting materials that are offered and participate in any trainings, tutorials, and workshops
- Check that you have a stable internet connection to participate in video chats
- Don't be afraid to ask questions to the academic unit's career services office hosting the fair

**Sign up.** Register, establish a profile, and upload your resumé on the virtual career fair platform. Depending on the platform, employers may do more targeted recruiting by screening candidates prior to the fair and invite you to meet with them during their scheduled chat times. One of the benefits of a virtual format is that recruitment can happen at any time, not just during the career fair hours.

## RESEARCH EMPLOYERS

**Research organizations.** Review the fair's employer list often since employers can register until the day of the event. Research organizations that are of interest to you in an effort to gain general knowledge and have questions prepared in advance.

Learn about organizations' history, mission, values, culture, positions, opportunities for advancement and professional development, career paths, locations, benefits packages (compensation, health insurance, retirement, tuition assistance, etc.), financial performance, organizational structure/charts, and company reviews. Consider if jobs require relocation, remote work, or travel.

### *Where can I research employers who are attending the fair?*

- [HireMizzouTigers.com](https://www.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 that you are interested in before the fair. The more you know about an organization and its opportunities, the more you will be prepared to ask questions and have meaningful conversations. You will show employers that you have a genuine interest in their organization, which will leave a strong first impression.

**Review employers' availability and sign up (if applicable).** Now that you have done your homework and researched organizations, it is time to review employers' availability and sign up for time slots (if applicable). Do not wait until the last minute! It is very important that you follow through and attend the session(s) that you are interested in and/or signed up for. Chat functionality will vary across virtual career fair platforms (phone, text chat, video chat, and/or group chat). Students who fail to show up or cancel a virtual employer meeting or interview without proper notification may be subject to consequences outlined in the [professional etiquette policy](#).

## YOUR INTERACTIONS

**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.”

## 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?

**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>, and you can practice on <https://missouri.biginterview.com/>.

## SET UP FOR THE BIG DAY

**Consider your location and background.** Locate a clean, quiet space with a professional background (no posters or signs for alcohol, politics, or inappropriate images). Consider a [Mizzou-themed virtual background](#) if you can add one. It is very important to limit any distractions or noise interference: turn off or mute other electronic devices and make sure you aren't interrupted by other people. If you need help, check with your [academic unit's career services office](#) for assistance to locate an interview space (depending on availability).

**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 camera-friendly attire such as solid, neutral tones in black, blue, and gray. [Truman's Closet](#) is a free service for all Mizzou students to access professional attire.

**Test your technology.** Take time to make sure the software applications are downloaded and working properly. Test your camera and microphone. The picture and audio should be clear and crisp. Check your internet connection again, and make sure your device is fully charged or plugged in. Having issues with your technology could negatively impact your virtual career fair experience.

**TIP: LOG IN A FEW MINUTES EARLY TO YOUR CHAT SESSIONS  
OR SCHEDULED 1:1 APPOINTMENTS!**



**Use effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills.** Even though the career fair is virtual, you should still use the same verbal and non-verbal communication skills as you would in an in-person career fair. The only difference is that technology is being used to help you and employers communicate. This requires for you to be consciously aware and to check-in with yourself more often to ensure that there are no barriers with delivering your message.

## Award-winning interaction ideas:



### LIGHTS

The location should be well-lit, so employers can see your face clearly. If possible, the light source should be positioned in-front of your face (i.e. face a window).

### CAMERA

Set your camera position at eye level as it feels more like you are communicating face to face. Maintain eye contact when speaking by looking into the camera as opposed to looking downward or around.

### READY

Show employers that you are interested and engaged by having a confident voice tone, good posture (i.e. lean in and avoid slouching), and smile and nod often to show understanding. Limit nervous fidgeting and large gestures as they can be distracting.



### ACTION

Take notes and use active listening skills to pay close attention. Repeat and paraphrase back the questions, and ask your own informed questions. Appear confident and try to stay calm and poised. Just as you are trying to make a good impression, employers are trying to do the same with you.

**Additional Advice.** Just as you would do the necessary preparation before an in-person career fair, dedicate the same amount of time preparing for a virtual career fair. Don't just "wing it!"

- Keep in mind that there are most likely other students and alumni who have scheduled 1:1 appointments with employers. **Be respectful of the time** and keep conversations brief, but don't cut the recruiter off. Let the conversation end naturally.
- **Follow through with any action items** that you and employers discuss. For example, if an employer asks you to apply online, then take that next step, and then follow up with an email to let them know.
- It is possible to make a **personal connection with recruiters** in a virtual career fair. Recruiters will engage with hundreds of students and alumni through multi-media formats, but they will remember you personable, friendly, professional and inquisitive. Remember, they are people, too. Ask them about work related things such as how they like being a recruiter, what their favorite thing about the organization is, etc. However, avoid getting too personal (asking about families, relationships, etc.).

## FOLLOW UP

**Take notes.** After the fair has ended, jot down notes about the organizations and write down recruiters' contact information that you engaged with during the virtual career fair.

**Write notes.** Send [thank you notes](#) to each employer with whom you had interacted with. Confirm your interest in the organization, highlight your skills and inquire about next steps. You can send an email immediately afterwards or a written note within a week of the fair.

**Follow instructions.** Employers have their own hiring processes, **so follow instructions carefully** and apply for any positions of interest. Most organizations use a recruitment management system that requires online applications to help with tracking and screening application materials.

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