



## Career Fair Preparation



## Prepare for the 2021 Summer Internship and Opportunity Fair

<http://go.osu.edu/SummerInternshipFair>

The Summer Internship and Opportunity Fair targets undergraduate students interested in obtaining a resume building opportunity for Summer 2021. This event hosts organizations from all over who are most dedicated to diversity. These employers embrace, value, and live inclusive excellence.

**WHERE:** Handshake (Virtual)

**WHEN:** Thursday, March 4th from 1:00-5:00pm

**WHO & WHY:** Employers are excited to connect with you and discuss available internships, volunteer opportunities, and part-time work in the following areas:

- **Business-related functions:** Communications, advertising, public relations, marketing, retail management, sports management, and finance/financial services
- **Nonprofit management:** Organizations represent a variety of focus areas including the arts, healthcare, social services, women's issues, and others
- **Summer and recreation camp counseling and management:** Summer day camps and resident camps will be in attendance as well as other recreational sports or activity organizations

**Pre-registration is required for students.** You are also encouraged to prepare for the fair by having your resume reviewed. You may request an online appointment with a career coach to review your resume here: <http://go.osu.edu/MeetYourCareerCoach>

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Applicable Career Communities:



## Getting Started

To view information about the organizations that will be participating in Summer Internship & Opportunity Fair on March 4 (1pm-5pm), log into Handshake and click “Events” at the top. From the Events page you can filter to view Career Fairs and either scroll to find the fair or type “2021 Summer Internship & Opportunity Fair” in the search box.

### 1. Research Registered Employers

Study the list of participating employers and choose the 6 to 8 organizations that interest you the most. You will likely connect with more employers during the event; however, this small group will serve as your targeted employer group...your “A List” employers. Steps for researching employers is found at the end of this document.

### 2. ASAP: Schedule Times to Meet with Employers via Handshake

Once you know what employers you want to connect with at the virtual career fair, go to Handshake and schedule time with each. Time slots are limited and will fill up weeks in advance of the fair.

- Schedule an appointment in Handshake by going to the Jobs tab at the top, clicking on Applications, clicking on each Virtual Career Fair Employer Chat and selecting your desired time slot.
- Your scheduled chats will appear in the “On-Campus Interviews” tab on Handshake.

### 3. Obtain Help from a Career Coach

A common mistake is attending a career fair without goals for how to “work” the event. This is evident when students ask questions like, “Which positions are you hiring for?” or “What jobs do you have for Political Science majors?” This question implies you didn’t research the organization beforehand and you may be looking for *any* job. It’s understandable if you are confused about a career path or questioning how to make a good impression at a career fair. A Career Coach can help you formulate what to say to move conversations forward with recruiters.

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# Tips Specific to a Virtual Career Fair – The Week Before

## 1. Prepare Your Workspace

Doing a few small things to get organized can help you stay calm and be confident when it's your time to shine.

- Look at your workspace to make sure it is free of distraction for both you and the employer.
- Have a notebook and pen nearby to jot down topics that were discussed, your thoughts about the organization and contact information.

Check your technology to make sure it syncs with the career fair app. During this dry run, test out the lighting in your workspace: do you need to make it brighter or dimmer?

## 2. Choose Your Threads

Even though you are not meeting employers face-to-face, you still need to dress the part. Professional attire will help you feel confident and make a good first impression. Remember to wear neutral colors, as well as avoid any patterns or jewelry that may be distracting on camera.

Keep in mind that the mix of employers in this fair is a bit different from some of the other fairs you may have attended. For example, summer camps and other recreational types of facilities may be less formal and not require a strict dress code during the event. They may also differ in terms of interview and follow up procedures. These are great topics to explore with a career coach, or to investigate prior to the fair.

## 3. Develop & Practice Your Elevator Pitch

The impression you make when first interacting with a company contact is critical to your success as a job hunter. Improve your chances by preparing and practicing a one-minute “commercial” about yourself and the contributions you could make to an organization. For guidance on how to create your pitch view the See the Writing Your Elevator Pitch tip sheet found [here](#). Have your pitch in digital form to use when interacting with recruiters via the chat function. Remember to use professional communications when chatting online – no text slang or emoticons.

#KeepItProfessional

## 4. Update Your Resume

Some recruiters will make your resume the focal point of their online chats with you. Have you updated it to include your current GPA, any new duties you have taken on at a job site that relate to the positions for which the career fair employers are hiring? Great care should be given when writing and formatting it! Resume resources are viewable [here](#).

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## 5. Consider Attending a Prep Event

Make a habit of checking the Events Calendar in Handshake. The Career Coaches organize events to help students prepare for recruitment events and you may be able to leverage other events to maximize your success at a career fair. For instance, an alum working at one of your target employers may be participating in a Career Success Coffee Chat – attending that event would likely provide insights for good questions to ask during the career fair. If you are a leader of a student organization that is comprised of mostly Arts and Sciences majors, consider scheduling a Career Coach to present to your organization on resume writing or other career success topics. You can request a presentation [here](#).

## 6. Prepare Questions

Be ready to ask the recruiters questions to determine if the organization would be a good fit for you. Think of questions that will lead to further discussion with the recruiter. For example, asking “What skills should a volunteer coordinator have?” will possibly allow you to share examples of when you have demonstrated those same skills. Set up your questions in digital format so you can cut and paste them into a chat box.

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## Tips Specific to Virtual Career Fairs – During the Event

### 1. Arrive on Time

Whether virtual or in-person, promptness is necessary. With limited time to meet with an employer, you need to optimize your time slot and show that you are dependable and respectful.

- Confirm your scheduled time slots by looking at the “On-Campus Interviews” section of Handshake.

### 2. Turn Your Camera On

Employers participate in career fairs to source strong candidates, and that determination is made in part by how well you communicate during the event. By turning your camera on, the recruiter will be able to evaluate how well you show enthusiasm for their opportunities through eye contact and other non-verbal communications.

### 3. Stay Upbeat

In an ideal world, students would know in advance which career fair recruiters were genuinely interested in speaking to them. Unfortunately, the employers who participate in such events follow various recruitment practices. For instance, some are interested in speaking to freshmen and sophomores to provide pointers on building strong resumes; some are eager to discuss their internship programs with students of all ranks; some are strictly interested in collecting resumes from seniors or recent graduates who are ready to obtain full-time employment. To complicate matters further, an individual recruiter’s attitude may change over the course of the career fair: someone who started out with a willingness to talk to all ranks may shift gears, if they aren’t collecting enough resumes for their open positions, to focus exclusively on talking to seniors or recent graduates. Additionally, some companies change recruitment goals prior to the career fair. Therefore, even though the information they have posted in Handshake specifies an interest in collecting resumes from students with your particular major or career goals, they may be hiring for fewer positions by the time of the fair. It’s important for you to recognize the variability in recruitment styles you will encounter during a career fair. Don’t take it personally if a recruiter doesn’t seem interested in considering your resume. Instead, focus on staying upbeat and move on to another employer.

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## Steps to Take After A Career Fair

### 1. Apply to Open Internships and Jobs

Visit the employer's Handshake page and their website to see what positions are posted. Make sure to check back frequently as new opportunities are posted daily.

- Not ready to apply yet? Save the jobs you are interested in on Handshake to receive reminders about upcoming application deadlines.

### 2. Follow Up with Select Recruiters

- Within 48-hours, contact each employer of interest by sending a thank you e-mail and including an extra copy of your resume. Depending upon the extent to which you discussed specific opportunities, consider including a couple of sentences that address how your skills and experiences fit with their hiring needs...this can help with putting you at the forefront of their memory as they are working on selecting candidates for interviews.
- Within 96-hours, complete any online applications. These steps may be a required component of the application process, regardless of the contact you have already made with the recruiter. A quick turnaround in completing will demonstrate your interest and level of commitment to working for them.

### 3. Obtain Help from a Career Coach

Attending a career fair may spark lots of questions (e.g., how to move forward with the employers with whom you had positive interactions?) or prompt you to re-evaluate your career goals. Or, you may be wondering about how to connect with employers that did not participate in the career fair. Meeting with a career coach can be a great post-fair step to take!

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## Conducting Employer Research

Gathering information in advance will allow you to become an informed conversant with the recruiter(s). When you show a recruiter your understanding of their company, you will stand out!

### 1. Start by visiting the employer's Handshake pages

Some employers share information about their mission and values as well as their entry-level opportunities. Read the student reviews of the employers on their Handshake pages. This is a great way to learn about the first-hand experiences of your peers.

### 2. Next, review the organization's website

Some organizations have robust Careers sections that detail out their specific employment and internship opportunities as well as provide information for you to evaluate the organization's culture – including their commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as well as their support for staff professional development. If you're not seeing this type of content on the organization's website, the collection of links found [here](#) (scroll to the Job Search Advice & Research Sites section) provide helpful information for job-seekers.

### 3. Discover

With your research, try to discover the following for each of your target employers:

- What is their predicted growth? Expansion plans?
- What media coverage have they recently received?
- Where are the geographic locations for employment (branches, subsidiaries)?
- What qualifications do they look for in entry-level hires?
- Which of their internships or jobs match your interests?

*This document was created in partnership with the Office of Student Life at the Ohio State University.  
This tip sheet includes text prepared by that office and Career Success.*

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