Getting results at a career fair

What to **wear** to the fair

▶ **It’s best to err on the side of more formal:** We recommend business professional. Dress for the most conservative company on your list. Don’t be remembered as “the extremely under dressed one!”

▶ **Men**
  - Suit – matching jacket + pants in gray, black or navy
  - Shirt – light colored or lightly patterned oxford
  - Tie – a little style is okay, but nothing too flashy
  - Shoes – polished black or brown dress and a belt!

▶ **Women**
  - Suit - two piece suit; if skirt, hemline near the knee
  - Shirt - oxford, sweater or sleeveless with modest neckline
  - Shoes - heels under 3 inches (no strappy shoes or sandals)
  - Jewelry - small earrings, necklace and wristwatch (a classic look!)

▶ **Notes for everyone**
  - Don’t bring a backpack to lug around - opt for a messenger bag or purse
  - Bring a pad folio with resumes and paper/pen to take notes about employers
  - Visit CareerNetwork.msu.edu and click “Jobs + Internships” then “Appearance and Attire”
Women

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• Shirt - oxford, sweater or sleeveless with modest neckline
• Suit - two piece suit; if skirt, hemline near the knee

Follow up.

Approach an organization.

They’re watching you!

Get organized.

Research employers of interest.

Know who will be attending. Before the fair begins, know which organizations will attend and what positions they are hiring for currently. Get this information through Handshake. Make a ranked list of employers that interest you.

Research employers of interest. If you want to stand apart, be able to talk to the recruiter about what the organization does and how your skill set fits. At a minimum, go to their website, learn about products, services, or clients, and read the annual report. See pages 52-54 for more ideas.

Prepare your resume(s). Make sure your resume effectively reflects your knowledge, skills, and abilities. You can have a general resume to hand out, but if you really want to make a great impression, make different versions of your resume that target the specific industry or job that interests you. Make sure you give the right resume to the right organization! (See pages 32-39.)

Develop your elevator pitch. You only have about 30 seconds to make an impression with a recruiter, so you need to be able to quickly introduce yourself and let them know your interests and qualifications. Practice a short 30-second to one-minute story that you can present easily while still sounding natural. Things to include:

- Your name
- Your MSU program/major (optional)
- When you’re graduating
- What you’re looking for (more information, full-time employment, an internship or co-op, etc.)
- Your area of interest within the organization and how your skills (or personal qualities or experience) relate to that area.

Get organized. Pick up a map showing where organization booths are. You might also want to take a quick walk through the space to get a feel for the layout of the fair. Then what? . . .

They’re watching you! Keep in mind that the moment you enter the fair, recruiters are watching you. They take note of how you dress, how you behave, and how you interact with your friends and with other recruiters.

Approach an organization. It can be intimidating to approach and introduce yourself to a recruiter. Students often say introductions at career fairs are “weird,” “unnatural,” or “forced.” It helps if you remember the recruiter is here to meet you, so don’t be shy! Offer a firm handshake, and then share your elevator pitch. Remember, be direct. If you’re interested in a certain position, let them know.

Don’t talk over their shoulder or at the free stuff that they’re giving away! Make eye contact and don’t be afraid to let your enthusiasm show. Being truly passionate about the employer and the opportunities they have to offer can make all the difference.

Talk to the recruiter. Don’t talk over their shoulder or at the free stuff that they’re giving away! Make eye contact and don’t be afraid to let your enthusiasm show. Being truly passionate about the employer and the opportunities they have to offer can make all the difference.

Gather information and be respectful of the recruiter’s time. The truth is that most people at career fairs use them as an opportunity to gather information. This is perfectly fine and a great reason to go if you’re not looking for a full-time job or internship. Remember, career fairs are all about networking, and recruiters love to see 1st- and 2nd-year students at fairs asking questions. It shows that the student is thinking about and making connections for the future!

If you’re at the fair to try to land a job, recruiters need to know you’ve done your research and are ready to go. While speaking with recruiters, be courteous to them and your fellow students by keeping your conversations short and purposeful.

Finally, make sure that you get the names of the recruiters you talk to and, if possible, get their business cards.

Follow up. If, during your conversation with a recruiter, you promised to follow up with more information (website link, portfolio, writing sample, etc.) then make sure that you get the information out right away.

Send thank-you notes. Send a thank-you note within 24 hours to everyone you talked to. This is a little thing that really makes a difference! Almost everyone has the intention, but very few actually get around to it. Don’t know what to write? See information on thank-you letters on page 44 or at CareerNetwork.msu.edu. It doesn’t have to be fancy—the point is to remind them of who you are and let them know you’re serious about your job search.
**fall 2017**

**SEPTEMBER 6**
**student job & internship fair**
Local businesses, along with on-campus employers, will be present to talk with students about part-time job and internship opportunities.

**SEPTEMBER 13**
**accounting & information systems career exchange**
Meet with over 40 employers offering internships and full-time roles!

**SEPTEMBER 14**
**business analytics & marketing research career fair**
Meet with employers to explore career opportunities in the growing fields of big data analytics and consumer insights - and how these are shaping the future.

**SEPTEMBER 19**
**finance association career fair**
Connect with recruiters who are specifically looking for MSU students interested in the field of finance.

**SEPTEMBER 20**
**engineering co-op/intern exchange**
Networking between students, alumni and company recruiters to open doors to co-ops & internships.

**SEPTEMBER 23**
**construction management career fair**
More than 30 employers attend to talk with students about full-time jobs and internships.

**SEPTEMBER 28**
**sales leadership career fair**
Did you know that 80% of entry-level careers begin in the field of sales? This event is for all majors and all levels!

**OCTOBER 3, 4, 5**
**career gallery**
The largest fair of the year—a three-day event! Over 300 employers and 6,000 students attend.

- Science, Agriculture, Food, Environment, Packaging & Health Exchange (Oct. 3)
- Engineering & Technology Exchange (Oct. 4)
- Business Exchange (Oct. 5)

**OCTOBER 24**
**graduate & law school fair**
Meet with representatives from more than 130 graduate programs in law, health, science, business, public affairs, arts, humanities and more!

**OCTOBER 26**
**nursing career fair**
This event attracts 30–40 health organizations offering full-time positions, externships, and volunteer opportunities.

**NOVEMBER 3**
**international student career & resource fair**
This event focuses on home country opportunities (full-time, part-time, and internship) plus employment opportunities that require OPT, CPT, or sponsorship in the U.S.

**spring 2018**

**JANUARY (TO BE ANNOUNCED)**
**diversity career fair**
This inclusive event attracts over 2,400 students and 150 well-known employers representing a variety of industries.

**FEBRUARY 7**
**spartan start-up**
Dream of starting your own business? Visit with Michigan start-up companies looking for students to join their teams.

**FEBRUARY 9**
**ComArtSci connect**
This event connects employers looking for students interested in the fields of advertising, public relations communications, media information, sales communications, telecommunications, and more.

**FEBRUARY 13**
**environmental, natural resources & sustainability fair**
For students interested in environment, conservation and the out-of-doors.

**FEBRUARY 23**
**engineering expo**
Come to gain knowledge of companies, interact with alumni, network with professional engineers, and get “insider” info. Coordinated by The Center for Spartan Engineering, egr.msu.edu/thecenter.

**MARCH 21**
**summer job & internship fair**
Over 80 employers attend to meet students looking for full- or part-time seasonal jobs or internships.

**APRIL 16**
**teacher & administrator fair**
This annual MSU event attracts over 125 school districts nationwide seeking to recruit new teachers and staff.

Tobacco products are prohibited on MSU grounds. Learn more at TobaccoFree.msu.edu

CareerNetwork.msu.edu 65