So, you’re ready to make your move, ready for action. Whether you’re looking for an internship or a full-time job after college, the process of looking for the position (and employer!) that’s right for you is pretty much the same and both involve developing a search strategy. A **search strategy** is a plan or series of steps to help you obtain your goal: Getting an offer for a position that fits your interests, skills, values, and personality.
According to information from the U.S. Department of Labor, up to **80% of all positions are filled without employer advertising.** Think about it. It saves time, energy, and money for the employer to hire people they know, who have been referred by a trusted source, or who have made contact directly. And not only is this more efficient, it also often means the employer is getting a candidate who is not just looking for a job, but looking for this job.

**98% of U.S. employers have fewer than 100 employees.** That means these organizations often do not recruit from college campuses. To find these “hidden” employers, you need to have a strategy.

**The average American with a bachelor’s degree has about 10 different jobs between the ages of 18 and 34.** Again, this is data from research done by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. To survive—and advance—you’ll have to become skilled at job hunting. Your first job out of college is just the beginning of a lifelong process.

The Internet should not be your only means of searching for jobs!

*Talking to people*, asking questions, and being able to quickly and easily describe who you are (your interests, skills, experience) and what you’re looking for may be your best job search method.

Conduct *informational interviews* (pages 24-27) and don’t be afraid to network (pages 58-59)!

**Using multiple job search methods will help you find a position faster,** as data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics suggests. Read on for more about those methods and how you can decide which might work best for you.

**Take advantage of MSU resources like Handshake, workshops and career events, employer events and info sessions, SpartanLinks, and other student organization meetings to meet and discover potential employers.**
Developing your search strategy

Do you remember those “Choose Your Own Adventure” books you read in elementary school? Well, developing your strategy is a lot like that. You may start off down one path to find that it’s not working, or that it didn’t pan out the way you wanted. You may end up deciding you want to go off in a new direction. An unexpected opportunity might present itself. The job search is also a very personal process. There is no one job search technique that will work every time for everyone.

As you develop your search strategy, you should:

- **Create a list of 5–10 organizations** where you’d like to work. These organizations should get most of your attention. Actively work to meet people in the organizations and learn more about their goals.

- **Create a second list** of organizations you have some interest in. When you have time, do some basic research to refine the level of your interest and find possible networking or career openings.

- **Keep a log of research and activities**, so you know whom you’ve called, when, and next steps. It’s embarrassing to call someone twice because you forgot that you already called, or not to call at all when someone asked.

But how do you narrow the field? Read on!
define what you’re looking for

What are your search criteria? Be honest with yourself and the people you talk with about your search (whether it’s your Career Consultant, Career Advisor, or professional contacts you’ve made). Common search criteria are:

- Geographic location
- Application of your skills
- Connection to interest/passion
- Fit with work values
- Compatibility with personality

If you find that you’re having a hard time putting parameters around your search, start by going back to the “Explore Your Future” section (pages 18-29) for tips on resources, tools, and methods for getting some clarity.

field-specific research: focus & identify opportunities

Focus & identify opportunities. Research can make all the difference in your search. You need to look more like a great potential colleague than a desperate job seeker! It’s your job to do the research needed to understand your top employers’ needs and place yourself in situations where you can demonstrate your abilities. Where do you find the people you want to work with?

Professionals organizations. Nearly every profession you can think of has a professional organization — American Institute of Graphic Arts, American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science, Association of American Publishers, American Sociological Association, American Library Association, Society of Illustrators, American Chemical Society, Association of Music Writers and Photographers — to name just a few.

For links to professional organizations that might be of interest to you based on your field of study, check out “What Can I Do with This Major?” and our online Career Tools at CareerNetwork.msu.edu/search (see page 12). Even a basic Google search with the name of your field of interest and “professional organization” will often yield good results.

Organization websites usually have info on current trends, salary surveys, job listings, directories of accredited graduate/professional programs and more. Check to see if they offer a discounted rate for student members and join while you’re still in school to take advantage of the savings!

Prepare to Make Your Move

Developing Your Search Strategy

- **Subscriptions** to many of these publications can be costly, so make use of copies or electronic subscriptions available through your academic department, Career Services, and MSU Libraries.

- **Job listing and professional resource sites.** Use Career Tools at CareerNetwork.msu.edu to find links to job boards and posting sites that might be of interest to you. And click on the Career Tools to search for lists of potential employers, industries, professional organizations and potential employers. You can search by geographic location and even find salary information and get info about where recent MSU students landed their first job!

- **Social media.** Yes, social media can be a part of your research and job search. See more on page 59.

**Employer Research: The Right Place, the Right Job**

*Find the right place to find the right job.* Some people are completely flexible when it comes to location. In that case, focusing on field-specific resources to identify specific employers is a great move. But if you’ve got some particular geographic areas in mind, or are geographically limited, there are resources that can help you uncover employers by location.

- Click on Career Tools at CareerNetwork.msu.edu/search (page 12) to find accurate, up-to-date information on potential employers and contacts in a wide range of industries nationally and internationally. Explore the industry (or industries) and geographic area(s) you’re interested in, and find employers located there! You can also research salary information and get valuable insider information on industries, career fields, employers, cities, and countries.

- **MSU Libraries** has databases and other resources offering a wealth of information on specific employers. And unlike a generic Google search, the MSU library provides employer info that is authoritative, credible, and timely. Library resources are free to current students and it can give you a competitive edge with quality information that employers will notice. Email the Gast Business Library for help with employer research: gastbus@broad.msu.edu.

- **Find and make use of local resources** such as newspapers, networking groups, Chambers of Commerce, regional alumni clubs (check alumni.msu.edu for regional and international groups), etc. in your area of interest. They are a great way to find people who are doing work you find interesting.

- **Additional sources include:**
  • Employer websites
  • Annual reports
  • Recruiting materials/packets
  • Marketing materials
  • Media articles and coverage (check out press releases on their website too!)
  • And don’t forget social media!
International students

- Whether you are considering employment during your time at MSU or afterwards, it’s important to partner with both the Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) and the Career Services Network at MSU.

- OISS can explain your U.S. work authorization options, assist you with the proper documentation in many instances, and give you tips on how to talk to employers about your immigration status.

- The Career Services Network offers resources and programs to build your resume writing and interviewing skills, one-on-one career advising, career workshops and fairs, and connections to jobs and internships.

**International students’ work authorization options**

- **Off-campus Employment**
  - F-1 or J-1 students (unless prohibited by J-1 sponsor) are eligible to work off-campus ONLY with pre-approved employment authorizations:
    - **before graduation**
      - F-1 students - Curriculum Practical Training (CPT)
      - J-1 students - Academic Training (AT)
    - **after graduation**
      - F-1 students may apply for 12 months of work authorization, called the Optional Practical Training (OPT)
      - J-1 students (unless prohibited by J-1 sponsor) may apply for up to 18 months (36 months for post-doctoral) of Academic Training (AT)

- **On-campus Employment**
  - F-1 or J-1 students (unless prohibited by J-1 sponsor) are eligible to work on-campus for 20 hours a week when classes are in session without work authorization.
  - Work that exceeds 20 hours per week on campus or any work off campus must be authorized in advance by OISS.

**Goals after graduation**

- **Working in the U.S.**
  - Know your work authorization options and partner with OISS.
  - Identify international student-friendly employers, the Global Talent Retention Initiative of Michigan is a great resource for this: migtri.org.
  - Learn about U.S. work culture/values by getting engaged in groups on campus and develop your communication skills in the community.
  - Build your personal and professional network: start with LinkedIn.com, reach out to MSU alumni, and conduct informational interviews.

- **Working in your home country/another country**
  - Build your network in desired country: connect with MSU alums, join MSU student groups affiliated with the country where you wish to work.
  - Use your existing network: reach out to friends and family to conduct informational interviews.

- For more information on work authorizations and Resume, Interviewing, and Networking Guides, visit the OISS website: oiss.isp.msu.edu/students/employ/

- Or visit their office:
  - Office for International Students and Scholars (OIS) 427 Shaw Lane, Room 105, International Center
  - Phone (517) 353-1720
  - Email: oiss@msu.edu
  - Web: oiss.msu.edu/students/employ
  - Drop In Hours: Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri., 1-3pm

**Online Career Help**

- For in-depth information specifically for international students, visit http://careernetwork.msu.edu/resources-tools/student-resources/resources-for-international-students.html. You can personalize your online resource search at CareerNetwork.msu.edu/search.

**Handshake**

- Whether you are looking for a position on or off campus, OISS and Career Services encourage you to become familiar with Handshake, MSU’s online advising, events, and job and internship resource. Access your account at CareerNetwork.msu.edu/Handshake.
Government & nonprofit work

Government employment

“why work for government?”

Employees in the public sector get to work on challenging and complex issues often affecting the lives and legacies of many people. Students say “I don’t like campaigns or elections” but the majority of government employees are working outside the election process. Government employees are often eligible for student loan repayment assistance or forgiveness in addition to competitive compensation packages. Government positions touch every part of life in America, from commerce, to education, the environment, law, families, communities, public transportation, safety, and more.

“what do I need to know about government employment?”

Did you know the federal government employs people in all fields from art to zoology and is among the leading employers of liberal arts grads?

In fact, thousands of humanities and social science alums work in federal agencies. And median salaries for these workers tend to be higher in the federal government when compared to other employers. High rates of retirement—more than 100,000 employees are eligible to retire over the next few years—are creating job openings across the government. Some agencies will post openings on their own website while others will post through USAjobs.gov.

The good news is that even though there can be more steps, federal and state governments are more transparent about how to successfully compete for openings. Many agencies include advice for applicants, sample resumes, interview questions, and selection criteria right on their website. The State of Michigan has a Career Services office for applicants and offers resume reviews and individual appointments with their staff. Many agencies also host prospective employee events in large cities or web-based workshops on how to be successful in your search.

There are great resources to help you! The USAjobs.gov website Info Center has special information for students, (including a list of federal jobs by college major), as well as tutorials for how to use the system, tips on applying, and more.

“isn’t the application process hard?”

The basics of applying for federal or state positions are similar to private industry. It usually starts with a resume and cover letter. Depending on the position or agency, you may have additional forms, documents, or questionnaires to submit, so pay attention to the information included in the “How to Apply” section of postings.

Government jobs span all parts of the US and overseas. In fact, only 8% of federal positions are located in Washington, DC. Additionally, state, country, and city governments have all kinds of positions for college students and graduates, too.

Visit the government websites for your locations of interest and talk to your Career Consultant or Career Advisor for assistance.
finding your niche at a nonprofit

If you’re looking for a chance to use your talents with a sense of social contribution, a career with a nonprofit might be right for you. Nonprofits have full-time, paid staff performing all the tasks a for-profit business has, such as management, volunteer coordination, writing, accounting, graphic design, and much more. People from all kinds of academic backgrounds find nonprofits a rewarding and fulfilling career path.

Nonprofit organizations raise and generate revenue, but making a profit isn’t their goal; they are focused on their mission and use their revenue to that end. Nonprofits can be professional associations, political activist organizations, educational institutions, museums and cultural organizations, and human service providers, just to name a few. If there is a cause or issue you care passionately about, chances are there’s a nonprofit doing great work on that issue who may be hiring!

getting started

With so many nonprofit organizations, here are some tips on where to begin:

▶ Be specific. Which causes are you passionate about? Literacy and education, the environment, advocacy, human or animal rights? Which interest area would you like to support? Public health, business services, outreach, research? The more specific you can be, the more successful you will be in finding an organization that might be right for you. See resources below to learn more about specific organizations and positions.

▶ Don’t forget the little guys. You may be familiar with large organizations like the United Way, Red Cross, or Sierra Club; however there are many smaller nonprofit organizations that might not be so well known offering great jobs.

▶ Show your skills. Are you a good writer? Event planner? Do you have web-development or graphic design skills? The more you stand out as somebody who offers a number of valuable skills, the more competitive you are.

nonprofits & government agencies come to campus!

These employers attend large events such as career fairs throughout the year (see pages 64-65). They may also attend Career Exposure Series events, workshops, or offer information sessions. Always check Handshake to see which employers are visiting campus and make an effort to connect with them during these events.

to learn more about nonprofits

For more information on nonprofits, including nationwide and international job postings, visit Idealist.org. Be sure to visit their The Idealist Guide to Nonprofit Careers and other great tools. MNAonline.org is another popular site from the Michigan Nonprofit Association. Nonprofits can be found from coast to coast! Visit CouncilOfNonProfits.org for nonprofit listings and resources by state.

Many MSU graduates begin their nonprofit careers through “term of service” programs such as AmeriCorps. Check out AmeriCorps.gov and see more “term of service” opportunities through Idealist.org.

1 in 10 U.S. jobs are found in nonprofits

U.S. nonprofits have over 10.7 million employees

U.S. nonprofits have $2.87 trillion in total assets

There are over 1.5 million nonprofits in the U.S.
Building your network

We’ve given you methods and tools for finding professionals working in your fields of interest. What are you doing right now to create or establish those important professional relationships? Meeting people gives you an opportunity to learn from them. If you are not sure what career path you would like to pursue, talk with many different professionals… they can help you narrow your areas of interest. (Read more about the first step to building your own personal network, informational interviewing, on pages 24-27.) Remember, networking should begin long before your job search and often you don’t even realize that you are doing it!

Networking is usually an informal discussion with people you already know, or have just met. In fact, most students use networking all the time without even realizing it. When scheduling classes, have you ever asked a friend or classmate about their experiences, or to recommend a good class or section? When making a (relatively) large purchase such as a new cell phone, athletic shoes, computer, or even a car, have you asked people you know what they’ve liked or disliked about theirs? Have you posted questions (or answers) to social media discussing these kinds of topics? Guess what—that’s networking!

Networking takes place whenever you:

- Meet with faculty or staff—especially a Career Advisor (see pages 12-13)
- Attend an event, career fair or MSU workshop (Handshake has list of all these opportunities.)
- Meet guest speakers or engage with your peers in class or through a student organization
- Talk with family, friends, and other acquaintances about their work
- Post messages on Facebook, LinkedIn, other websites, and blogs
- Volunteer for a community service event

Since networking can happen anywhere, be prepared to introduce yourself and deliver your pitch about who you are and what you want to do. For some students, this often happens at their part-time job in conversations with customers and clients. “You’re a student at MSU? What are you studying? What do you want to do after graduation?” You never know when that conversation can lead to a new contact or even an invitation to pass along your resume!

The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that up to 80% of positions are filled without employer advertising.
Certainly you’ve gone online to connect with others in order to share ideas or information! Two popular social media sites are Facebook and YouTube; however, there are many other tools that you may choose to use in obtaining or sharing information that can help you develop your career.

Your Career Services Network at MSU is prepared to help you understand the importance of social media in your career development. Here is a quick overview of several social media web-tools you may want to consider using.

▶ LinkedIn. Over 300 million professionals use LinkedIn to exchange information, ideas, and opportunities. See www.linkedin.com for information on how to effectively build your profile, connect with contacts, and find opportunities. **Tip:** Search for and join groups based on interests and affinities. Being a member of a common group expands your network. Don’t forget to join SpartanLinks!

▶ Plaxo. A smart, socially connected address book. Tracks feeds from Twitter, Facebook, and dozens of other sites.

▶ Twitter. Stay updated with professionals or employers and keep others up to date with this instant information tool. Use Twitter directories like WeFollow.com and Twellow.com to find professionals and organizations related to your interests that you may want to follow. Many organizations have Twitter accounts dedicated to job postings.

▶ Facebook. Yes, employers and professionals are on Facebook too. Even if you don’t choose to add professional contacts as friends, be aware that employers (and your future colleagues) are very likely to look you up on Facebook or Google you before you even come in for an interview. If you like the idea of using Facebook for both personal and professional reasons, search pages and groups for field or employer specific info or communities. Also consider using your status updates strategically to help your network of friends help you.

The use of social media in learning about potential career paths, receiving feedback on job search documents (e.g., resumes), connecting with alumni, and networking with professionals in your field of interest is becoming one of the most important avenues for successful job seekers.

Visit CareerNetwork.msu.edu and click on the Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube icons for our collection of streams, sites, and channels.

SpartanLinks is a group on LinkedIn that connects MSU students to alumni working in their areas of interest. Alumni who join are looking to share insight, advice, and expertise with students and recent graduates. Student, alumni, and employer members within this main group discuss general career topics such as resume writing, interviewing, job search strategies, workplace trends, and employment/recruiting trends.

Members will also have the opportunity to join subgroups related to their chosen career function (e.g., communications, environment, entrepreneurship, etc.) where they can participate in group discussions, read posted articles, and discuss job opportunities related to their career field.

The MSU Alumni Association also has a large LinkedIn group that students can join to connect with other alumni. In addition, many regional MSU Alumni Clubs have LinkedIn groups specifically for those living and working in that area. If you are planning to relocate or are looking for an internship in a particular area, these groups can be useful resources!

After you’ve joined MSU groups that fit your interests, search groups to find professional associations, industries, or interest affiliations to join. As a member, you can comment on discussions, find exclusive job listings, and meet people who share interests.
Dress to impress

You know that thing about never getting a second chance to make a first impression? Well, it’s true. It’s just as true about a blind date as it is about meeting a professional contact for the first time. Regardless of the circumstances, you want to make the best impression you can the first time around—or you might not get a second chance!
Professional dress matters because it helps you to project an image that lets the employer see you in the professional role you are seeking. The whole working world doesn’t revolve around dark, conservative suits. **What you wear for a professional encounter depends on the career field you’re pursuing.**

**Always follow these general guidelines:**

- Hair should be clean, well groomed, and away from the eyes. Simple, classic styles are best.
- No visible tattoos or body piercings.
- Remove extraneous earrings. (Women: one pair. Men: none.)
- Avoid strong mints, perfumes, or aftershaves.
- Clothing should work for you, not against you. Fit and comfort are important considerations in projecting yourself at your best.
- Trendy clothing—like short skirts, low necklines, extreme prints or colors—generally do not project an image appropriate for a professional meeting.
- Crisp, clean, well-pressed clothing is a must.

**Who wears what?**

- For **traditional careers**—like banking, accounting, finance, engineering, law, and corporate positions—you’ll need a conservative look that conveys competence and authority.
  - Suits should have a classic cut or style and be dark in color (navy, dark grey, black, etc.). Shirts and blouses should be a neutral color, like white, ivory, light grey, etc. Ties and scarves should be subtle with a little color.
- For those pursuing **technical careers**—in areas like engineering, information technology, sciences, etc.—a clean look that conveys knowledge, innovation, and approachability is important.
  - Suits should be conservative in subtle dark colors. Blouses and shirts should be a subtle color.
- **People-focused careers**—counseling, teaching, sales, and social work, for example—require an image that projects expertise but approachability.
  - Suits should be conservative in subtle dark colors; coordinate separates can work too. Blouses and shirts should be a subtle color.
- The most opportunity for expression of personal style can be found in **creative careers**—like advertising, art, design, and entertainment, to name a few. In these fields you’ll need a contemporary image that conveys creativity, innovation, and competence.
  - Suits can vary in cut, style, and color; two-piece coordinates are acceptable. Blouses and shirts should accent your total look. While you will often see professionals in these careers wearing jeans and other more casual clothing, it is best for prospective professionals to step it up a notch. Show your creative flair, but **remember to look more like a professional than a student.**

**What to wear for less formal meetings**

So, for more formal interactions like career fairs and interviews, hopefully it’s clearer now why suits are usually your best option. But if you’re going to a fair as an information seeker instead of a job seeker, or if you’re attending an event like a conference, informational interview, job shadow, etc., a suit may make you overdressed.

For these kinds of interactions, you always want to dress professionally—no ripped jeans, flip-flops, or T-shirts with obscenities on them. Save these clothes for your friends, not a potential employer.

Follow the "dress essentials for everyone," and consider the items below when you’re picking out what to wear . . .

- khakis
- blazer
- button-down
- sweater
- dress shoes
- shirt
- dress pants
- loafers

And remember, when in doubt, **check with an insider** (your employer contact or Career Advisor, for example) **about what the appropriate dress** in a particular situation might be!
The Michigan Department of Corrections is seeking qualified women and men for positions throughout Michigan. Candidates must meet the following criteria:

Must be 18 or older and possess a current LPN or RN licensed for the State of Michigan. 1 year of clinical experience preferred, but not required.

Applicants must not have any felony convictions or any conviction for domestic violence or drugs.

MDOC BHCS RECRUITMENT (517)335-3855
EMAIL: BHCS-Recruitment-Mailbox@michigan.gov
WWW.MICHIGAN.GOV/STATEJOBS

Who says you can’t choose your Family?

The Meridian Family is expansive, and each family member plays a pivotal role in the success of the business. Our core values of passion, vision, integrity and quality are centered on family and woven into everything we do. Come grow with us. Over 379 openings!
Remember, job seekers are more likely to find a position faster by using more than two job search methods. We’ve given you many to choose from. If you have trouble deciding which will be best for the kind of position you’re seeking, see your Career Consultant or Career Advisor for assistance.

CareerNetwork.msu.edu/Advising
don’t forget you can use CareerNetwork.msu.edu to get times, locations, and links to see the list of who’s attending and sign up to be a student ambassador.

Attendee lists and ambassador sign-up are coordinated through MySpartanCareer.

If you didn’t already, check out why it’s a good idea for freshmen and sophomores to attend career events on page 19. And don’t miss “How to Get Results at a Career Fair” on pages 66-67. CareerNetwork.msu.edu/handshake for days and times of Career Fair Prep workshops.

career exposure series

Ever wondered what it’s really like to work in a particular field? Are you looking for ways to meet MSU alumni who have created rewarding careers in your areas of interest? Here’s your chance to connect with alumni who are out there working and want to share their experiences, insight, and advice with you!

Attend any and all sessions that fit your interests. Bring your curiosity and an open mind. Leave with ideas for how you can create a meaningful career path that will take you where you want to go.

Check CareerNetwork.msu.edu for session topics and details. Information will also be available in Handshake. Most require that you RSVP in advance to attend. Events fill up fast!
**fall 2016**

**SEPTEMBER 7**
**earn, learn & intern**
Local businesses, along with on-campus employers, will be present to talk with students about part-time job and internship opportunities.

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

**SEPTEMBER 14**
**accounting & information systems exchange**
Meet with over 40 employers offering internships and full-time roles!

**SEPTEMBER 15**
**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 22**
**construction management career fair**
More than 30 employers attend to talk with students about full-time jobs and internships.

**SEPTEMBER 22**
**finance association career fair**
Connect with recruiters who are specifically looking for MSU students interested in the field of finance.

**SEPTEMBER 27**
**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!

**SEPTEMBER 27, 28, 29**
**career gallery**
The largest fair of the year—a three-day event! Over 300 employers and 6,000 students attend.

- Science, Agriculture, Food, Environment & Health Exchange (Sep. 27)
- Engineering & Technology Exchange (Sep. 28)
- Business Exchange (Sep. 29)

**OCTOBER 25**
**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 27**
**nursing career fair**
This event attracts 30–40 health organizations offering full-time positions, externships, and volunteer opportunities.

**NOVEMBER 1**
**international student career 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 2017**

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

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

**FEBRUARY (TBA*)**
**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 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.

**APRIL 3**
**teacher & administrator fair**
This annual MSU event attracts over 125 school districts nationwide seeking to recruit new teachers and staff.

*TBA= TO BE ANNOUNCED

As of August 2016, tobacco products are prohibited on MSU grounds. Learn more at TobaccoFree.msu.edu
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”
before the fair . . .

- **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.

. . . at the fair . . .

- **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, not to give 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 makes 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.**

. . . after the fair . . .

- **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 45 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.
You’ve got an interview: Now what?

the **PARK** method

- **P** the **PROBLEM** or situation (“What happened?”)
- **A** the **ACTIONS** you took (“What did you do?”)
- **R** the **RESULTS** or outcomes (“What was the result?”)
- **K** the **KNOWLEDGE** you gained and applied (“What did you learn? How did you apply it?”)

At right is typical behavioral interview question… and a possible response, using the **PARK** method.

**Q:** “Tell me about a time when you had to deal with conflict in a group.”

**A:** “Last semester I was part of a student advisory board to my academic department. We were developing a set of recommendations to improve faculty student communication. It was difficult to get the various members of the board to agree on which recommendations to choose, because everyone wanted theirs. I focused on helping us look for common elements between each recommendation. The result was that we ended up recommending a faculty-student retreat in which many of the more specific recommendations were used. Through this experience, I learned how important it is to really look at things from the perspective of each team member.”
**Interview Basics**

**What’s the Point of an Interview?**

The purpose of an interview is to exchange information. The employer evaluates your ability to do the job. You look for a match between your interests and the work.

Be prepared with information about the company and the job, as well as with questions that you have developed. By taking these steps, you’re ready to be an active participant in this exchange about your future.

**What’s a Behavioral Interview?**

Behavioral interviewing assumes that your past experiences are good indicators of your future abilities. You’ll be asked to tell stories about your past so that the employer can assess your skills and behavior. There may not be a right or wrong answer. There is only your answer that may reveal something about your qualities to the employer.

By thoroughly understanding the nature of the job and the organization, you can more accurately select examples from your life that have meaning to the employer.

“Tell me about a time...”

Being able to talk about your experiences in such a way that employers can identify your skills is a challenge. One way to help organize your experiences is to use the PARK method. The PARK method helps you focus on the most relevant aspects of your experience for the employer in a structured way.

**Be Prepared!**

Being prepared for the interview is very important. The employer has already agreed to meet with you based on your resume and cover letter—you’ve made it this far. Now to be confident in your interview, you need to be prepared. The following things will help you:

- **Research.** Find out everything you can about the organization and the position. The interviewer will be able to tell if you’ve done your homework. The more you know, the more you’ll be able to connect your experiences and skills to the needs of the employer. This will also help you to create a list of good questions to ask at the interview.

- **Make a List of Skills.** Before the interview, make a list of your skills and abilities. These are what will make you an asset to your future employer; use the list to put yourself in a positive frame of mind and help you *sell* yourself to the interviewer. Your portfolio and resume are great starting points for this list, since they both sum up your experience and interests.

- **Sample Questions.** Check out www.ReadyPrepInterview.com for common and specific questions related to the job titles you’re interested in.

- **Practice!** The Career Services Network offers practice interviews throughout the year. Check Handshake for dates and times to sign up or to request practice interviews. Some schedules may be limited to students in specific majors or colleges.

- **You can also use InterviewStream to practice interviewing using a webcam!** Seeing yourself in action is a great way to test your ability to answer common interview questions and get prompt feedback on your body language and speech patterns. After all, you’re your own best critic! Find InterviewStream at CareerNetwork.msu.edu under the “Jobs + Internships” tab in the section on Interviewing.

**Interview Tips**

- Arrive early and appear relaxed and organized
- Seem interested and alert
- Connect your skills, background, or experience to the job
- Only say positive things about past employers or co-workers
- Ask questions that you don’t know the answers to
- Realistically present your qualities

- Ask about salary and benefits after you have a solid job offer
- Allow for “quiet time” for the interviewer to think and take notes

Get more interview resources, including a list of sample interview questions, at CareerNetwork.msu.edu
conditions of a job offer

Before you get a job offer, or as a condition of your offer, you will likely have to go through one or more of the following:

- Pre-employment testing can include drug/alcohol, agility, genetic, personality, honesty, skills, loyalty, and leadership tests.
- Background screening can include a credit check, criminal records investigation, driver’s license check, academic credentials verification, and reference checks.
- Reference checks can include academic, employment, and personal references.

While students and job applicants may think of these tests and investigations as an “invasion of privacy” or “offensive,” there is nothing illegal about employers seeking this information.

happiness is a balance

The most important question to ask yourself is: Are you excited about this job and the salary? If you are not happy, you will not be a great employee, and you aren’t likely to have a good experience with the organization. But it’s also important to balance your excitement and passion for the field you’re entering with a realistic expectation for financial rewards.

You don’t have to accept the first salary you’re offered. You have the ability to negotiate for better benefits, training, or pay.

Feel free to ask for time to adequately examine your total offer. Get all of the elements in writing, including benefit options, stock options, and wages.

negotiation tools

The strongest tools to negotiate with are salary information for your industry and the value of the unique skills that you bring to the table.

The industry’s economic climate and the location of your position will both have a major influence on your salary offer, even when compared to other candidates within the same company. New York City is not the same as Traverse City in cost of living. Use our online Career Tools (see page 12) to find salary and cost-of-living information.
Professionalism, honesty, ethics

expectations

On campus, we expect you to follow certain policies and practices, and to honor your commitments—and to do this with a high degree of integrity.

Keep in mind that your actions are not isolated and many constituencies will in some manner be affected by your decisions.

Performing with integrity means:
- Accepting responsibility for your actions, including your mistakes.
- Keeping your word and following through.
- Making principled decisions based on personal and professional ethics.
- Following the Golden Rule—treating others as you would like to be treated.
- Acting consistently and transparently in all your dealings.

policies (see Career Network.msu/Handshake)

- **falsification of information**
  
  Students and alumni registering and submitting their resume and data are certifying that the information is truthful and accurate. Those found providing false information in any way risk becoming ineligible for on-campus interviewing and Career Network services.

- **interview cancellation**
  
  You are expected to accept the responsibility for keeping every interview appointment scheduled. Canceling late or not showing up may result in becoming ineligible for on-campus interviewing. For these situations, you will be blocked from Handshake (for the first incident) and will be required to follow a process to reinstate your access.

  - **Late cancellation.** See handshake for important information.
  
  - **No-show.** A “no-show” for an interview is professionally unacceptable and demonstrates a lack of respect and responsibility. Even in an emergency situation, you should contact and inform the Career Center.

- **acceptance of job offer**
  
  If you’ve accepted a job offer, you should not continue to interview with employers. Notify employers whom you may have upcoming interviews with and withdraw your application.

- **reneging**
  
  Reneging is accepting a job offer and then changing your mind in order to accept an offer with another employer.

  Reneging can damage your reputation forever—and may make you ineligible for on-campus interviewing and Career Network services. The university does not sanction reneging on your part for any reason.
SPARTANS WILL LEAD

Leadership is no longer restricted to specific titles, it happens at all levels. Today’s employers desire professionals possessing deep disciplinary knowledge with a keen ability to communicate and work across social, cultural and economic boundaries. Individuals capable of solving complex problems in collaborative and innovative ways are in high demand.

HOW WE CAN HELP

Through the Alumni LENS, the MSU Alumni Association helps Spartans of all ages succeed in expanding their leadership competencies. Leading without authority, perseverance, cultural awareness, emotional intelligence, effective communication and problem solving are all topics of discussion within the portfolio of the Alumni LENS.

Through a combination of personal, professional and online enrichment opportunities the Alumni LENS provides a unique opportunity for students and alumni to grow together.

alumni.msu.edu/lens