

# Career Center

## Career Fair Prep Guide

### How to plan your career fair experience—before, during, and after

#### What to expect from the career fair:

- You can learn about employers and positions that match your interests beyond the information you can find online
- You have the opportunity to make a good impression with an employer in person
- Through these conversations, you should hope to increase your chances of an interview after the career fair  
Note: Companies will not interview you or offer you a position at the fair
- You should bring multiple copies of your resume to the fair, but you will often still need to apply online to opportunities you're interested in
- You may have to wait patiently in a line to talk to particular employers
- If others are waiting to talk with an employer, you may only have a few minutes for your conversation
- You are in control of the conversation through describing how you overlap with the organization's needs or asking thoughtful questions

#### Before

##### Do your research

- Look up the companies that will be at the career fair and the event information and what jobs they have posted on CareerConnections  
Note: Companies have specified if they hire graduate students and/or sponsor for visas
- Learn more about the companies and jobs they typically offer
- Create a strategy for the order in which you will visit employers
- Write thoughtful questions for each employer

#### Prepare your resume

- See the Career Center's website for online guides to resume writing
- Attend a Career Center resume workshop
- Receive feedback on your resume at drop-in advising or resume labs—see CareerConnections for a calendar
- Print copies of your resume on higher quality paper

#### Plan and practice your 30-second introduction

##### Create business cards

While not required, business cards can be an easy way to exchange contact information at career fairs, conferences, networking events, or other social situations. Plus, offering your business card can be a good prompt for a recruiter to offer theirs in return.

- Official Duke supplier (with logos): <http://eprint.universalprinting.com/duke/about.html>
- General business cards: <http://www.vistaprint.com>
- Creative business cards: <https://www.moo.com/us/>

#### Plan your attire

- Gauge if the types of companies you will talk to would prefer not to see facial piercings or tattoos, and choose attire accordingly
- Avoid using hygiene products with strong scents
- Look at pictures from the company's website and social media to see how employees dress
- Match employee's attire, and err on the side of dressing a little nicer if you are unsure
- Make sure you feel confident and comfortable to be on your feet for a couple of hours
- Wear your clothes a few days early if you are not accustomed to that type of attire
- Guides for what to wear: <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/blog-entry/what-wear>



## Accommodations

If you need accommodations for a disability in order to attend the Career Fair, navigate the space, or talk with employers, contact the Student Disability Access Office at least two business days in advance:

<http://access.duke.edu/students/>

## During

### Freshen up

- Grooming & hygiene: check that you look put-together and professional
- Avoid strong fragrances as the American nose prefers a clean, neutral scent

### Make sure you bring

- Duke ID
- Nametag (if you have one)
- Proper attire (and a change of clothes if you don't want to wear your career fair attire all day)
- Nice folder, notebook or padfolio with a pad of paper and a pen
- Business cards (if you have them)
- List of companies you want to talk to, strategy for how to talk to them, and lists of questions to ask
- Copies of your resume (one for each employer you would like to speak to plus a few extras)

### Do not bring

Leave extra bags, backpacks, or coats at home or in your department. These items can be cumbersome, and there is no protected storage space at a career fair.



## Check in

Grab a complimentary mint to freshen your breath and prevent dry mouth.

## Get an overview

Walk around the fair to find your employers of interest and potentially learn information about employers you had not considered.



## Review or revise strategy and talk to recruiters

- Revisit your strategy to see which employers you will visit first and make changes as needed after judging how long lines are or if you find out new information
- Firm handshake, make eye contact, smile and show enthusiasm, as your well-researched questions, take notes on their responses, offer your resume and/or business card
- Ask for their business card for follow-up, and after talking to them write down specific details of the conversation on the back of their card
- Get help at the Graduate Student Help Center to receive a tour of the fair, practice your introduction or questions, talk about how a conversation with an employer went, or ask any questions about the fair

## After

Send thank you messages via email within 24 hours of the fair.