

Career Fair Prep



Career Fairs enable you to interact with employers and explore career opportunities. Since they are essentially networking events, be sure to make the best impression that you possibly can. Prepare ahead of time, know yourself, your strengths, your experience, and what interests you in various positions and companies.

Before the Career Fair:

1. Update your personal information on the Hire System

- Know your username and password.
- Upload your resume and enable employers to view your resume.
- Research and even apply for positions that are of interest to you.

2. Know yourself

- Identify careers and industries that interest you by considering your skills and abilities.
- Think about what type of setting you would like to work in (Fortune 500, start-up, non-profit, etc.).

3. Develop your resume

- Have your resume critiqued by a Career Consultant prior to the fair.
- Print several copies (10-15) on resume paper which you can get for free from Career Services.

4. Research companies coming to the fair

- Review the list of employers coming to the fair on the Career Fair Plus App.
- Identify reasons for wanting to work with these employers.
- Prepare questions you may want to ask. Questions are an opportunity to gather more information, show interest, and determine fit:
 - » What type of projects do new hires/interns work on?
 - » Is there a mentorship program for new hires/interns?
 - » Can you tell me a little about the training process new hires complete?
 - » How is success measured at your company?
 - » What does your organization consider the five most important qualities in an employee?
 - » What courses do you suggest to help me become a successful candidate?
- Use the notes handout on the next page or create your own.

5. Dress for success

- Dress in such a way that you are eliminating distractions. Your appearance should be neat and professional.
- Be clean and use deodorant liberally. Be sure your breath is fresh.
- Any and all tattoos/piercings other than ears should be covered as best as possible.
- A two-piece suit is sufficient in most cases. Avoid fashion extremes when choosing your outfit. A white or light colored button up shirt is preferred with about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch falling below the suit at your wrist and the top button fastened. Patterns or colors should be non-distracting.
- Wear closed-toe shoes in a neutral color at a height which with you are comfortable walking.

Career Fair Notes Table:

During the Career Fair:

1. Arrive early for ample time to network

2. Use your time wisely

- Find your top companies using the Career Fair Plus App, and star them so you can find them on the map.
- Consider ranking the employers you are interested in and start with the last ranking company first. This way you have an opportunity to practice your elevator pitch and get your nerves out.

3. Bring a portfolio to carry copies of your resume

- You can purchase a portfolio through Career Services for **ten** dollars in 360 Student Union.

4. Make a positive first impression

- Make good eye contact.
- Shake hands firmly.
- Smile and be confident.

5. Prepare and use your thirty-second elevator pitch

- Introduce yourself.
- What is your objective?
 - » Gain a part-time job, internship, or full-time position?
- Your summary.
 - » Experiences, academic projects, campus involvement that are important for that company/recruiter to hear.
 - » What contributions or value can you bring to the company?
- Closing statement(s)
 - » End with a question to keep the conversation going.

6. Actively listen to the recruiters before you respond

- Offer your resume or business card.
 - » You can purchase 250 business cards through Career Services for **ten** dollars in 360 Student Union.
- Ask them for their contact information so you can follow up with them.
- Thank them for their time and pick up any employer literature or giveaways.

After the Career Fair:

- Follow up with companies that you had meaningful conversations with quickly.
- Monitor job application deadlines on the Hire System.
 - » Apply for positions you are interested in, or learned about, at the fair.
 - » Some application deadlines are the same night of the fair or shortly after.
- Look for more networking opportunities.
 - » Check the events calendar for connection sessions or connect with them on LinkedIn.
- Ensure you check your email regularly and that your voicemail sounds professional.

Elevator Pitch:

Your elevator pitch is a quick, but well-prepared summary of yourself. Think of a 30-60 second introduction that includes all of the relevant details a recruiter would want to know in order to make the best first impression. Your elevator pitch should include:

- Name, major, class year, and graduation date.
- Your knowledge of the company/organization and your interest in a specific position(s).
- Highlights of related experience/ show how your major applies to the position(s).
- Summary of your experiences both in and out of the classroom that connect to the job.
- Explain how you can be an asset to the company/organization.
- An example of an accomplishment you're particularly proud to share.

Step One: Outline the Pitch



Who Am I?

Begin by telling the recruiter your:

- Name
- Year in school
- University
- Major
- Anything unique about your course of study



What Can I Offer?

- Accomplishments/skills that are relevant to the company or job.
- Projects, classes, internships, research, part-time jobs, campus leadership activities.



Why am I Here?

- "Here" as in the career fair, or networking event.
- Why are you interested in the company/job/industry.
- How your skills align with their needs.



What I Hope Happens in the Future ...

- What do you want in the future: How do I apply? What is the hiring process? How do I stay in touch via LinkedIn, email, etc.?
- You can also end with a question to invite the listener to join the conversation.

Step Two: Tips for Your Pitch



Length of Time

- 30-seconds is a good introduction and then, hopefully, you and the employer will continue the conversation.
- At a career fair, the conversation might extend to 3-5 minutes after the initial introduction.
- At a networking event your conversation might last around 15 minutes.

Practice your pitch until it sounds natural, but not rehearsed.

- Show appreciation and familiarity with the company based on your prior research.
- Present yourself by adding immediate value to the company in terms of your skills and experience.
- Be prepared for the employer to ask you questions regarding your pitch or your resume.

Examples:

“ Hi, I’m Amelia Malkin. I am a junior majoring in general business here at Oklahoma State. Last summer I interned with PNC Financial Services as a Sales and Trading Summer Analyst. I am now interested in pursuing a summer internship with Citi in Sales and Trading where I can utilize my communication skills and solid quantitative abilities. My experience as a student-athlete has helped me to develop a strong teamwork ethic, time management skills and the ability to stay calm under pressure. These abilities will help me to be successful in a financial services career. Can you describe some common projects an intern would get to work on in the Sales and Trading division? ”

“ Hi, my name is Jon Ling and I will be starting my senior year in a Psychology program at OSU with a profound interest in consumer research and product development. I am also the President of the undergraduate Entrepreneurship Association. I’m very interested in gaining experience in product development with a firm such as P&G, which continues to set the industry standard for analyzing consumer behavior and developing cutting-edge products. I’d like to learn more about internship opportunities within your organization. ”

“ Hello, I’m Julia Smart. I am a graduate student in mechanical engineering with an interest in design and testing. I have completed several mechanical engineering projects such as the Astronaut’s Coat Rack and last summer I completed an advance course on building robots. I am also very involved in the Robotics Club on campus, where I help lead a group of more than 30 students on various projects. I’m very interested in bringing my design, analytical, and teamwork skills to Ford this summer. Could you please tell me about entry level opportunities within your company? ”

Source: Carnegie Mellon University: Career & Professional Development Center