Career Fair Help

UT Dallasd offers several opportunities for students to meet in-person with employers, hiring managers, and recruiters. It is important to be prepared, to not be shy and make an effort to stand out. Laura Katen, the president of a New York professional development company, provided suggestions for making a positive impression in her article 8 Ways to Stand Out at a Career Fair published in the Muse.com. Here is a summary of her tips and a link to the full article is at the end of this document.

Tips

Know Your Guests

Before the event even starts, identify the organizations that will be in attendance and do some research on those employers you specifically want to talk to (create a list of questions for specific companies and recruiters). You can use Handshake to identify who is attending and go to the organization’s website to find out more about them such as their mission, culture, and other information.

Pack the Right Things

Consider what you need to take to the career fair. Pack a small purse or backpack or folder to store copies of your resume (20 copies are recommended) and a pen and note pad too. It is important to be mobile and to keep your hands free for plenty of handshaking and greeting employer representatives. Also, prior to the fair, remember to have your resume reviewed by a UCC Career Consultant. You can make an appointment on Handshake.

Keep Up

If the recruiter gave you specific instructions, be sure to follow them exactly, and don’t wait to submit your resume/application while the event is still on everyone’s mind.
Consider what you will wear. Professional dress is essential but also consider comfortable shoes since a career fair usually involves a lot of standing (see link below for suggestions).

**Confidence is Key**

One of the most important tips is to **not be shy during the event**. An effective approach as you visit each table is to be prepared with something to say, and to exude confidence and friendliness. Begin by introducing yourself with a smile, while making eye contact, and also provide a firm handshake.

**Be Prepared to Introduce yourself**

The recruiter may ask you questions, but you should be prepared with a well-rehearsed **elevator pitch**, which is a short summary conveying why you are interested in a certain company and how you would be a good fit for the organization (see link below).

**Let them Keep a Souvenir**

Remember to **hand your resume to the recruiter** during your elevator pitch—before any interruptions or distractions occur. You can use your resume to point out to the recruiter significant accomplishments and related experiences that make you qualified for the position.

**Keep Moving**

Ask relevant questions and inquire about **next steps** in the recruiting process. Offer to visit the recruiter in person or virtually for a longer conversation. When appropriate, as the conversation is ending, be sure to thank the recruiter for their time and ask for their business card—this will be a reminder of who you met with and also provide contact information for a follow-up note.

**Dress for Success**

Consider what you will wear. **Professional dress** is essential but also consider comfortable shoes since a career fair usually involves a lot of standing (see link below for suggestions).
Once the event is over, within a day or two, be sure and send a personalized thank you note (paper note or email) to the recruiter. Also remember to connect with the recruiter on LinkedIn.

- **Show Gratitude**

Finally, even if there is not a current opening at the company, you can always request to do an informational interview to stay in touch with this employer (see link below).

- **Stay interested**

The UT Dallas University Career Center wants you to be well prepared for the in-person event. Remember start early and prepare before the event, don’t be shy once you arrive, and follow-up with recruiters after the event. For more information, feel free to contact a Career Consultant through Handshake for an individualized appointment to discuss more tips.

- **Wait ... There's More**

  - **Link to full article:**

  - **For more information about crafting an elevator speech:**
    - [https://www.themuse.com/advice/perfect-pitch-how-to-nail-your-elevator-speech](https://www.themuse.com/advice/perfect-pitch-how-to-nail-your-elevator-speech)

  - **For more information on professional dress:**
    - NC State provides suggestions for both professional and business casual dress here:

  - **For more information about informational interviews:**