

ONLINE CAREER FAIRS & EMPLOYER INFORMATION SESSIONS

Learn how to succeed and make a great impression

In this tipsheet, you will learn about what you can do before, during, and after online career fairs and employer information sessions to make a great impression and to foster helpful connections.

What's a career fair?

A career fair can be a great opportunity for you to receive information, make connections, practice networking, and look for jobs. Employers value the opportunity and dedicate their time and money to recruitment in hopes of building their brand, distributing information, and finding potential job candidates.

Before the fair

A little preparation can go a long way to making a good impression. One can usually tell who has done their research before the event.

START WITH YOURSELF

Consider your strengths and skills that may be relevant to areas of work you are interested in. Check out the [Major Maps/Grad Maps](#) and the [Queen's Skill Cards](#) to identify and articulate your skills.

SEE WHO'S COMING AND DO YOUR RESEARCH

Find the list of expected attending organizations on our [website](#). Prioritize who you wish to speak to according to your interests before you visit the fair. Use that list to research your target organizations. This process will provide information to answer questions you might have about the organization and may help you form questions to demonstrate your interest.

UPDATE YOUR RESUME

Review your current resume to ensure that it includes the best mix of education (courses completed, courses currently being taken) and experience (paid and unpaid) for fields you're interested in pursuing. Check out our [Resume](#) tipsheet, attend the [Ramp up Your Resume](#) workshop, and consult [Queen's Best Resumes](#) to create an effective resume.

Online versus in-person fairs and events
There are some additional considerations to keep in mind when attending online events.

- Find a quiet, private and appropriately lit space for your interview
- Download, if necessary, and test and position technology in advance
- Have a professional and tidy background
- Have quick access to your resume and the job description
- Dress up – this will put you in a professional and confident mindset
- Turn off/mute all electronic distractions (e.g. phone ringer, app and computer notifications)

Thinking about going to a Career Services fair?

This year, we are offering:

Fall:

- Career Fair
- Further Education Expo
- Engineering and Technology Fair (2 days)

Winter:

- Summer Opportunities Fair
- Engineering and Technology Fair (2 days)

Before each event we will post the list of attendees online at:

<https://careers.queensu.ca/events-workshops>

At the Fair

1. Be sure to read the event program ahead of the fair. The program contains a list of employers so you can identify and prioritize those you wish to speak to.
2. Use your time strategically. Anticipate how much time you may need participating in the fair and leave some margin room in case you must wait to speak to an employer.
3. If students are being asked to provide resumes ahead of or during the fair, make sure that you update your documents, do some research on the organizations, and view jobs (if available) beforehand.
4. Be prepared to take notes easily, whether that is on an electronic device or with pen and paper, to record conversation details that may be helpful to remember. Clarify who you are speaking with. Remember names and note key personal characteristics to help you remember your new connections.
5. Create a positive impression with professional clothing and introduce yourself with a smile. Check out the [Dress Code Guidelines](#) tipsheet for more advice on how to present yourself; what you wear to an online event matters! Be prepared with questions and to explain how your skills and experiences relate to the organization and role.
6. Strike a balance in how much time you spend speaking to attendees—don't simply send your resume, but don't monopolize their time either.

HOW SHOULD I INTRODUCE MYSELF?

To help give your conversation a smooth start and reduce some anxiety, we recommend preparing your introduction before you go to the fair. Consider the key points and impression you want to make, instead of memorizing a script. It is important to be authentic, brief, and relevant to your audience.

Check out our [Networking](#) and [Information Interviewing](#) tipsheets for help introducing yourself.

WHAT QUESTIONS COULD I ASK?

Ask questions that will help you make a good match between what you have to offer and what an employer needs.

Skills required

Ask about the most important skills required for new graduates interested in this area.

Changes and trends

Ask about changes and trends they are seeing in their workplace and in the field generally.

Can you tell me about what initiatives your organization has in place to support new hires from equity-seeking backgrounds?

Experiences

Ask what non-academic skills and experiences have been helpful in their career development, and what experiences they look for in new hires.

One way to introduce yourself:

Hi, I'm ____.

I was wondering if I could talk to you about your summer internship program. I'm a third year _____ student and I was interested to learn your company does ____.

I've had some exposure to that that in my (summer job/volunteer work/course) at Queen's... and wanted to know about...

Growth and Development

Ask how they support their employees in professional growth and development – do they offer mentorship programs and events? Is there a budget provided for professional development such as conferences and further education? You can also inquire about initiatives they have in place to support new hires from equity-seeking backgrounds.

Getting started

Ask for advice on getting started in their field given current conditions in the industry, as well as what they like about their work and what topics they deal with that are interesting to them. They might also tell you how they (or others they know) got started in this line of work. You will find that some people have travelled unusual routes to end up where they are.

WHAT ABOUT THEIR QUESTIONS?

Be prepared to talk about yourself, as well. You are likely to be asked about your experiences and skills – be prepared to share stories that provide vivid examples of your abilities. Check out our [Interviews](#) tipsheet for more tips on answering questions about yourself.

After the Fair

Follow up.

Don't assume you've won the job from one conversation. Each employer at a career fair could talk to hundreds of students in a day. To stand out, consider following up with a thank you note.

In this note, include:

- Your name and a key highlight from your conversation that was memorable for you
- Appreciation for their time and enthusiasm for the role and/or organization
- Your next steps of action, if applicable and appropriate in sharing

Online Employer Information Sessions

Attending employer information sessions can provide helpful insight for your career decisions and job applications. For online information sessions, employers generally begin with an introduction and overview of the organization and potentially job opportunities that are available or upcoming. There is usually time allotted to answer attendees' questions, as well as potential time for one-to-one conversations with recruiters, hiring managers, and/or current employees who may be in attendance.

Similar to the preparation for career fairs, consider:

- Researching that organization and its purpose, values, and work culture
- If they are hiring for specific roles, review the job description
- Updating your resume to target that organization/industry
- How you will introduce yourself to make a strong first impression
- Reviewing the information the organization may have sent out regarding the format and logistics of the session

- Preparing thoughtful questions
- Planning what you will wear (aligned with indicated dress code for the session) and have on hand (paper/notebook and something to write with)

Want to learn more?

To take your skills to the next level, attend our [online Career Fair workshops](#) to develop strategies for making the most out of attending our career fairs.

Career Services offers [online Drop-in Career Advising](#) to answer quick questions related to all aspects of your career planning and job search - Monday to Thursday from 1:30pm to 3:30pm.

For more in-depth explanations, see the following resources:

- *Highly Effective Networking* by Orville Pierson
- *Get the Interview Edge* by Kim Chung & Elisa Hui
- *Information Interview Handbook* by Jeff Neil
- *60 Seconds & You're Hired* by Robin Ryan
- *21st Century Networking* by David Sole & Belinda Roberts
- LinkedIn Learning:
 - Course: [Creating Great First Impressions](#) (27 minutes)
 - Course : [Communicating with Confidence](#) (1 hour 16 minutes)