



Career Fair Success

Learn how to succeed at these high profile events.

A career fair can be a great opportunity for you to get information, make connections, practice networking, and of course – look for jobs! Employers also value the opportunity, and dedicate some of their precious time and money to coming on campus in hopes of building their brand, distributing information, and finding some potential candidates. To make the most of the opportunity, consider the following tips on what you can do before, during, and after the fair.

Before the Fair

A little preparation can go a long way to making a good impression. Employers can easily tell who has done their homework before the fair!

Start with yourself.

Think about all the areas of work that have always intrigued or mystified you. Write a list of keywords and topics that you can use in your introduction to describe your interests and start a conversation with representatives. Need help thinking about career options?

See who's coming.

Make a list of all the participants that might fall into these categories. If time is a factor rank the participants before you go.

Do your research!

Go to company web sites and see if some of your questions are answered there. By doing this you will appear more knowledgeable and interested when you visit a booth. Of course, your research might also lead you to dropping this participant from your list. To learn more check out the Company Research tipsheet.

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 areas you're interested in. To learn more check out the Resume tipsheet or workshop.

Get the List!

Thinking about going to a Career Services fair?
Each year, we offer:

**Fall Career Fair
Engineering and Technology
Fair x2**

**Summer Job Fair
Live and Work Kingston Fair**

Before each event we will post the list of attendees online at:
<http://careers.queensu.ca/students/services/events.html>



At the Fair

1. Be sure to pick up a program at the door. It contains a floor plan that will allow you to find the participants you want to talk to quickly and easily.
2. Avoid the crowds if possible. You will find it busiest on the half hour when most classes.
3. If the representatives are asking students to drop off resumes at the Career Fair, make sure that you check websites and view the jobs beforehand.
4. Take a notebook to prepare for follow-up. Record details of conversations, collect contact cards. Remember their name and note key characteristics to help you remember who they were.
5. Create a positive impression in your dress and introduce yourself with a smile. Check out the Professional Dress Code tipsheet for more advice.
6. Strike a balance in how much time you spend – don't drop your resume and run, but don't monopolize their time either.

How should I introduce myself?

To help give your conversation a smooth start (and reduce some anxiety!) it can be helpful to think about your introduction before you go to the fair. We are NOT recommending that you memorize a robotic speech to deliver mechanically over and over. Rather, think about the key points you want to make and put them together naturally. It is important to be authentic, brief, and relevant to your audience!

You might want to say something like:

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...

What questions could I ask?

Ones that will help you make a good match between what you have to offer and what an organization needs. For example:

What they like and dislike about their jobs.

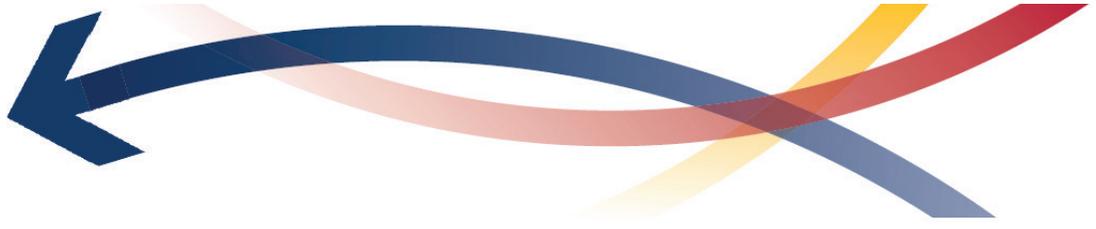
Ask representatives that are doing the kind of work that interests you what they like about their work—what topics they deal with that are really interesting to them. Ask them what they would change about their jobs if they could, and what other areas they considered, related to what they do now.

Skills required.

Ask representatives to comment on what they believe will be the most important skills required for new graduates interested in this area.

Changes and trends.

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



Experiences.

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

Getting started.

Ask for advice that they would suggest for getting started given current conditions in the workplace. They might also tell you how they (or others they know) got started in this line of work. You will find that people have sometimes travelled unusual routes to end up where they are.

What about their questions?

Be prepared to talk about yourself as well! Employers might ask about your background and skills – be prepared to talk about them with stories that provide vivid examples of your abilities. For more tips check out the Interviews tipsheet.

After the Fair

Following up... Don't assume you've locked up the job! Each employer could talk to hundreds of students in a day. To stand out, consider following up with a thank you note.

Want to learn more? To take your skills to the next level, check out our Career Fair workshops. To learn more about networking check out the Networking and Information Interviewing tipsheets, read books like Highly Effective Networking, or attend a networking workshop.