

Career Fairs & Employer Information Sessions

In this tipsheet, you will learn to:

- Identify key preparations tips **before** attending career fairs and employer information sessions.
- Implement effective strategies **during** career fairs and employer information sessions to make a positive impression.
- Apply follow-up techniques **after** career fairs and employer information sessions to maintain and foster valuable connections.

What's a Career Fair?

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

Upcoming Career Fairs

Fall Term

Engineering & Technology Fair

Career & Further Education Fair

Winter Term

Summer, Part-Time, and Volunteer Opportunities Fair

Engineering & Technology Fair

For dates & to register: [Career Fairs](#) | [Career Services \(queensu.ca\)](#)

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: 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.

Research Who Is Coming: Find the list of expected attending organizations on our [Exhibitor Guide](#) and prioritize who you wish to speak to. 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 combination of education (courses completed, courses currently being taken) and experience (paid and unpaid) for fields you are interested in pursuing. Check out our [Resume](#) supports, complete the Resume Module in the [Career Prep OnQ](#), or book an appointment with our Resume or Career Coach.

During the Fair

- **Dress Professionally:** Wear appropriate attire to make a positive impression. Refer to the Dress Code Guidelines tipsheet on our website for more advice. Wear a nametag with your name and program (provided at the fair).
- **Bring Your Resume:** Print several copies of your resume or prepare a QR code on your phone for employers to easily scan. Note that some employers may not accept a print copy of your resume and will request that you follow up with a digital copy, allowing you to customize your resume to the employer/opportunity. Ensure your LinkedIn profile is updated for additional reference.
- **Prepare Your Introduction and Questions:** Have your self-introduction ready, along with questions for employers. Clearly explain how your skills and experiences align with the organization and the role (if there is a specific one that interests you).
- **Review the Exhibitor Guide:** Review the guide provided that day in case some exhibitor attendance has changed (e.g. new ones got added) and to identify and prioritize the employers you wish to meet.
- **Engage Strategically:** Use your time wisely, anticipating wait times and allowing flexibility in your schedule. Balance your interactions by making meaningful connections without monopolizing an employer's time. It is recommended to avoid simply handing out your resume; try engaging in conversation and using active listening skills to leave a lasting impression.
- **Prepare to Take Notes:** Use an electronic device (e.g. your phone) or a notebook to record important details. Note names and key characteristics of individuals you meet to help you remember your new connections.
- **Follow Up:** After your conversations, send personalized follow-up messages or emails to maintain connections. Reflect on the interactions and take notes on any important follow-up actions.

Preparing Your Self-Introduction

To start your conversations smoothly and reduce anxiety, prepare your introduction before attending the fair. Focus on the key points and the impression you want to make rather than memorizing a script. Aim to be authentic, brief, and relevant to your audience. Check out our **Networking** and **Informational Interview tipsheets** on our [website](#) for more tips on introducing yourself.

Self-Introduction Example:

Hi, I'm [Your Name].

I was wondering if I could talk to you about your summer internship program. I'm a third-year [Your Program] student, and I'm interested to learn more about your company's work in [specific area or industry].

I've had some exposure to [related experience] through my [summer job/volunteer work/course] at Queen's University, and I am interested to know more about [specific aspect of the company or program]."

Questions For Employers

Ask questions that will help you determine if your skills and interests align with what the employer needs:

- **Skills Required:** "What are the most important skills you look for in new graduates interested in this area?"
- **Changes and Trends:** "What changes and trends are you seeing in your workplace and in the field generally?"
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** "Can you tell me about the initiatives your organization has in place to support new hires from equity-seeking backgrounds?" or "How does your organization measure the effectiveness of its diversity and inclusion programs?"
- **Experiences:** "What non-academic skills and experiences have been helpful in your career development?" or "What specific skills and experiences do you look for in new hires?"
- **Growth and Development:** "How does your company support professional growth and development?" or "Do you offer mentorship programs or events? Is there a budget for professional development like conferences and further education?"
- **Getting Started:** "What advice do you have for someone looking to start in this field, given the current industry conditions?"

Questions From Employers

Be prepared to talk about yourself as well. You will likely be asked about your experiences and skills – be prepared to share stories that provide vivid examples of your abilities. For more guidance on articulating your strengths and experiences, check out our [Interview](#) resources.

After the Fair

To maximize the impact of your participation at the fair and to maintain valuable connections moving forward, take some time to complete these steps:

- **List Names and Conversations:** Make a list of the names of employers you spoke with and record key details from these conversations, noting interesting topics discussed.
- **Plan Follow-Up Actions:** Consider who you want to follow up with and what specific actions you need to take next. We encourage you to send personalized follow-up emails to express gratitude to support your new connections.
- **Update Resume and LinkedIn:** Incorporate any new insights or information gained into your resume. If you use LinkedIn, update your LinkedIn profile by adding any new connections or learnings from the fair.

Follow-Up: Send a Thank You Message

When sending a follow-up message, consider the following tips:

- 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

Following up with employers will help you stand out and foster the connections you made.

Employer Information Sessions

Attending employer information sessions can provide helpful insight for your career decisions and job applications. In these information sessions, employers generally begin with an introduction and overview of the organization and potential 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 the organization and its purpose, values, and work culture
- If they are hiring for specific roles, reviewing the job description
- Updating your resume and LinkedIn profile to target that organization/industry
- Thinking about 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 the indicated dress code for the session) and have on hand something you can take notes with

Key Takeaways

- Plan ahead and research
- Prepare questions for employers, including key points to make /ask
- Ask for contact information
- Don't take things personally: sometimes recruiters or HR representatives may not give out business cards, it may be company policy
- Follow-up tactfully

Want to learn more?

For more information about connecting with employers and other professionals, see the *Informational Interview* and *Networking* tipsheets: <https://careers.queensu.ca/jobs-experience/career-support-tips>

To take your skills to the next level, attend our [Career Fair Prep workshops](#) (typically offered in the weeks leading up to the fair) to develop strategies for making the most out of attending our career fairs.

Career Services offers in-person and online [Drop-in Career Advising](#) to answer quick questions related to all aspects of your career planning and job search.