



# CAREER FAIR SUCCESS

*Learn how to succeed at these high profile events*

In this tipsheet, you'll learn about what you can do before, during, and after career fairs to make a great impression and foster helpful connections.

## What's a career fair?

A career fair can be a great opportunity for you to get information, make connections, practice networking, and look for jobs. Employers value the opportunity, and dedicate their time and money to come to campus with 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. 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 company representatives.

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

### SEE WHO'S COMING

Find the list of expected attending companies and organizations on our [website](#). Make a list of all the participants that match the keywords and topics that interest you. Rank the participants according to your interest before you visit the fair.

### DO YOUR RESEARCH

Use your list of participants to find company and organization websites to learn more about your target employers. These websites will provide information to answer questions you might have about the employer 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.

#### Get a Career Fair List!

Thinking about going to a Career Services fair?

Each year, we offer:

- The Fall Career Fair
- Engineering and Technology Fair
- Summer Job Fair
- Live and Work: Kingston Fair

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

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



Check out our [Resume](#) tipsheet or [Ramp up Your Resume](#) workshop for advice on how to create an effective resume.

## At the Fair

1. Be sure to **pick up a program** at the door. The program 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 end.
3. If the attendees 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 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 at a career fair.
6. **Strike a balance** in how much time you spend speaking to attendees—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, we recommend thinking about your introduction before you go to the fair.

We are NOT recommending that you memorize a robotic speech to repeat at every booth. 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.

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.

#### ***What they like and dislike about their jobs.***

Ask participants engaged in your target line of work what they like about their work and what topics they deal with that are interesting to them. Ask them what they would change about their jobs if they could, and what other fields of work they considered.

#### ***Skills required.***

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

#### **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...



### ***Changes and trends.***

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

### ***Experiences.***

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

### ***Getting started.***

Ask participants for advice on getting started in their field 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 some people have 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 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.

## **Want to learn more?**

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

Career Services offers [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, check the following resources in our [Career Information Area](#):

- *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
- *21<sup>st</sup> Century Networking* by David Sole & Belinda Roberts