



# Career Fair Tips for Students

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## BEFORE THE FAIR

### 1. Know what your goal is for attending the fair and design your entire effort around that aim.

*For example are you: Looking for a full-time, part-time or internship position?*

*Exploring various career opportunities and typical steps to success for those fields?*

*Investigating specific companies so you can learn more about what they do?*

*Practicing networking skills for future career fairs?*

### 2. Determine which career fields are right for you:

- Speak with a staff member at the Career Center.
- Review books and websites on “What Can I Do With A Major In.....?”
- Use our Discovery Tools (assessments) to help you determine potential career fits.

### 3. Research career fields and job titles of interest:

- Establish a realistic expectation of the careers you are considering by looking up job titles, descriptions of day-to-day duties, required qualifications, future job outlook, and salary ranges and benefits of various positions.
- Ask a staff member to show you how to locate the above information in the Career Library using library and web resources.

### 4. Research companies, agencies, or organizations that will be attending the career fair:

- Know in advance which organizations will attend and the positions that are open (Check the Career Center website for a list of attendees).
- Ask a staff member to show you how to complete employer research.
- Review employer websites.  
(See "Employer Research" at <http://www.sc.edu/career/Webresources/employerresearch.html>)
- Use the Career Center's *Company/Organization Information* tip sheet to document information that you discover.

### 5. Take steps toward making a good impression

- Prepare a well-written resume in advance of the career fair and have it critiqued by a Career Center staff member. (Plan to bring 20+ copies of your resume to the career fair.)
- Draft a sample thank-you letter and let a staff member look over it for you.
- Develop a list of questions to ask employers based on your research of their organization.
- Know what skills are needed for a career.
- Study the “corporate culture” of the organization and know how to use industry-related terminology.
- Know how to relate your past work, academic and out-of-class experiences to the career field.
- Know how to express what you are looking for and what you want.
- Prepare a career log in advance to document career fair information (i.e., to whom you have given a resume?, Are they scheduled to return to USC?, etc.)

### 6. Anticipate problems before the event and be prepared for anything:

- Bring an umbrella or raincoat in case of bad weather.
- Consider the time you'll need to travel to the fair, plan for heavy traffic, and take into account the availability and distance of parking to the facility.

## AT THE FAIR

### 7. Make a good impression:

- ❑ Arrive early.
- ❑ Dress professionally. First impressions count! Speak with a Career Center staff member about what constitutes appropriate attire.
- ❑ Smile, make eye contact, and shake hands firmly and confidently. Introduce yourself with your full name, major, and graduation date.
- ❑ Remember your body language...don't fidget or look around. Act interested, focused, and enthusiastic. Be friendly, assertive, mature, and sincere.
- ❑ Do not bring drinks or chew gum.
- ❑ LISTEN to what the recruiter has to say.
- ❑ Don't ramble. Provide a concise, well-prepared overall view of what you have to offer.
- ❑ Ask at least 2 intelligent questions of each organization, about such topics as: organizational statistics, company mission, client base, internship or co-op opportunities, summer or part-time employment, full-time career paths, trainee programs, benefits, hiring procedures, etc.

### 8. Make things easier on yourself:

- ❑ Network...while in line, talk to other students about recruiters they have spoken to already.
- ❑ Wear comfortable shoes.
- ❑ Speak clearly and loudly enough to be heard through the noise.
- ❑ Keep an open mind when speaking with recruiters.
- ❑ If provided, wear nametags prominently - list your name, class year, and degree. This will help employers remember you better.
- ❑ Bring 20+ resumes in a folder. You can separate resumes with different objectives for easy accessibility. However, be prepared to sell your skills and characteristics in person. Recruiters will remember their impression of you as much or more than your resume.
- ❑ Bring something to carry company literature, business cards and giveaways. (Don't be a 'freebies hog')
- ❑ Carry a pen and note pad.
- ❑ Take notes that can help you recall your conversations with recruiters. Consider ranking organizations ("A," "B," "C," etc.) and follow up immediately on all "A" organizations.
- ❑ Ask for the recruiter's business card for follow up.

## AFTER THE FAIR

**9. Be patient:** Some organizations may be "long-term" leads. Don't expect an immediate response.

### 10. Get organized:

- ❑ If you didn't already do so while at the fair, take notes about each organization on the back of business cards or in a log before you forget important information.
- ❑ Organize company brochures and contact information so you can easily begin the process of following up with employers.

### 11. Follow up with company representatives:

- ❑ Check JobMate to see which organizations from the fair are returning to interview on campus ([www.sc.edu/career](http://www.sc.edu/career)).
- ❑ Review materials in the Career Library on writing thank-you and follow-up letters, and how to speak with employers on the phone.
- ❑ Mail a thank-you letter as soon as possible to each organization you targeted for further interest to reinforce your good image and to "strike while the iron is still hot!"
- ❑ Approximately 2 weeks after mailing the letters, call the recruiter to confirm receipt of your letter and to express your continued interest in the company and desire for an interview.