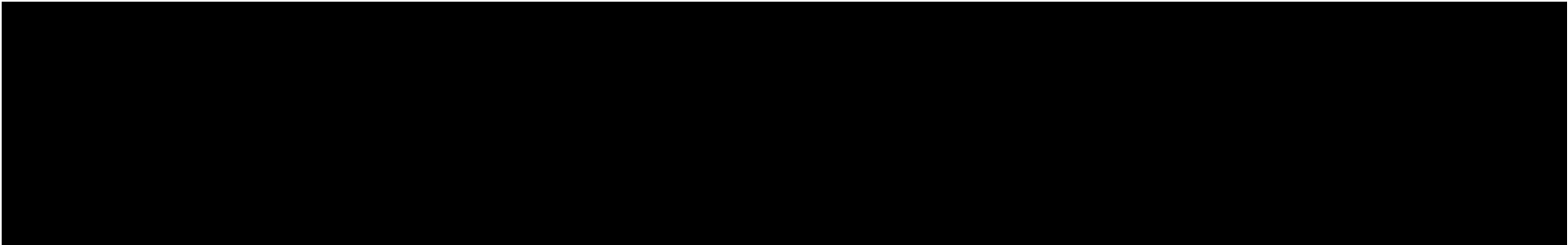


Making the Most of a Career Fair



You are responsible for making the most of a career fair. This means that you should begin with clearly defined and realistic expectations. While you will not receive a job offer at the fair, it is realistic to assume you will make a significant number of employer contacts. For most candidates, success will depend on effective follow-up after the fair. The following are steps that will assist you in making a great impression and possibly secure an interview.

Prepare for the Fair

1. Create a resume that highlights your skills and experiences that are related to your career goals and have it critiqued by the Office of Career Services (see the Resume Writing presentation for assistance).
2. Take advantage of career development workshops to include resume clinics and mock interviews and practice, practice, practice!
3. Research the employers attending the fair to learn about their company culture, the skills and experience they value, diversity and positions they hire. The research you conduct will also help in the formulation of questions you may have for them.
4. Create a professional look but don't wait until the last minute. If you need professional attire visit our Clothes Closet or if you want a second opinion on your attire we're here to assist you.

Things to Bring

- Copies of your critiqued resume (10-20 depending on the size of the event and the number of employers you'd like to meet)
- A smile, strong handshake and a positive attitude
- A 30-second sales pitch to introduce yourself and highlight your qualifications
- Information about the organization that you will be approaching
- A professional briefcase or portfolio for resumes, company information, business cards and notes
- Energy! Be your best and as refreshed as possible

Men's Professional Attire

1. Pressed and professional suit; dark colors: gray, navy, black, or brown. Solids or muted pinstripes
2. Jacket and pants should be same color. Button jacket when standing; unbutton when seated
3. White or conservative color dress shirt. Straight collar; long sleeves. Cuffs extending $\frac{1}{4}$ " beyond jacket sleeve
4. Conservative tie
5. Polished shoes and matching belt
6. Dark socks to compliment suit and long enough that skin is not seen when legs are crossed
7. Hairstyles should be conservative; get a haircut if necessary
8. Hands and nails neat and clean
9. Keep cologne to a minimum
10. Earrings, tongue rings, eyebrow rings, nose rings and visible tattoos are unacceptable (use a concealer to hide visible tattoos)

Men's Professional Attire



Women's Professional Attire

1. Pressed and professional suit (pant or skirt); solid colors are best: navy, black, brown or gray and appropriate color shirt or shell
2. Skirt length should be at or right below the knee
3. Polished closed-toe shoes with a heel no higher than 1 ½ inches
4. Flesh-tone hosiery to compliment suit
5. Hairstyle should be conservative in style and color
6. Hands and nails neat and clean; nails no longer than ¾ inches with conservative nail polish
7. Keep perfume and scented lotions and sprays to a minimum
8. Limited jewelry; earrings no larger than a quarter and one ring per hand, one necklace, etc.
9. Tongue rings, eyebrow rings, nose rings and visible tattoos are unacceptable (use a concealer to hide visible tattoos)

Women's Professional Attire





30-second Commercial

30-second Commercial

The 30-second commercial will arm you with all you need to begin an intelligent and effective conversation with employers. One of the worst things you can do is tell a recruiter, "I'll take anything" or ask, "What jobs do you have for me?" Such statements show a lack of interest and initiative. Prepare a short "commercial" to introduce yourself to the recruiter.

30-second Commercial

The 30-second commercial will arm you with all you need to begin an intelligent and effective conversation with employers:

- Provide your name
- Where you are now (degree/program, year in college)
- Where you have been (career-related experience) and the skills you have obtained that relate to the organization
- Briefly discuss job/internship opportunities (which you've found through your research) that they have available

30-second Commercial

“Hello, my name is Candace and I am graduating in December with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communications. As a student at Fayetteville State University, I have had a chance to gain leadership and communication skills through my campus involvement and volunteer activities. In addition, I have worked for two years as an intern with a local public relations firm which has allowed me to gain valuable experience in marketing and promotions. I am seeking a full-time employment opportunity in the field of public relations and was impressed with the recent Abby Awards your public relations unit recently received. Can you tell me about opportunities in which I can contribute to future awards for the company?”

At the Fair

- ❑ Locate your chosen employers. Concentrate on those organization you've identified your best matches and work your way down the list.
- ❑ Be professional and polite. When you approach a recruiter, be mindful of what he or she is doing. If the recruiter is with another student, give the recruiter and student some space.

At the Fair

- ❑ Offer your hand for a professional handshake and begin the conversation with your commercial.
- ❑ Listen carefully to what the recruiter has to say so that you can match your skills and interests to those required by the organization. You are gathering key information that you can use when you apply and/or interview for a position.
- ❑ Ask the employer for the next steps. Is the organization conducting interviews. Should you apply online? What should you do to be considered? Ask for the recruiter's business card. Those notes will come in handy when you follow up with them.

After the Fair

- ❑ Follow-up with those employers who piqued your interest. Send a thank you card or email to each recruiter whom you met. Express your appreciation for the time and advice offered, let the recruiter know that you have completed whatever he or she asked you to do (such as apply online), and reiterate your interest in the company.
- ❑ Undertake the next steps. Apply online, sign up for the organization's on-campus interviews or follow the recruiters' recommendations to help you move to the next phase in the process.



Questions to Consider Asking

Questions to Consider Asking

When preparing for the fair, think of and review questions that you would like to ask the recruiters. Please keep in mind that when asking questions, they should flow naturally and not sound rehearsed.

Questions to Consider Asking

- What kind of entry-level positions exist within your company?
- Do you offer internships? If so, what percent of interns are offered positions after graduation?
- How many employees are in my area of interest (which is...)?
- Does your company hire on a continual basis or just at certain times of the year?
- How long is the hiring process for an individual hire?
- What does your company consider the 5 most important qualities in an employee?
- Are graduate degrees important? If so, in what areas?
- What courses do you suggest applicants complete that are relevant to the job?
- Is there a GPA cut-off in the recruiting process?

Questions to Consider Asking

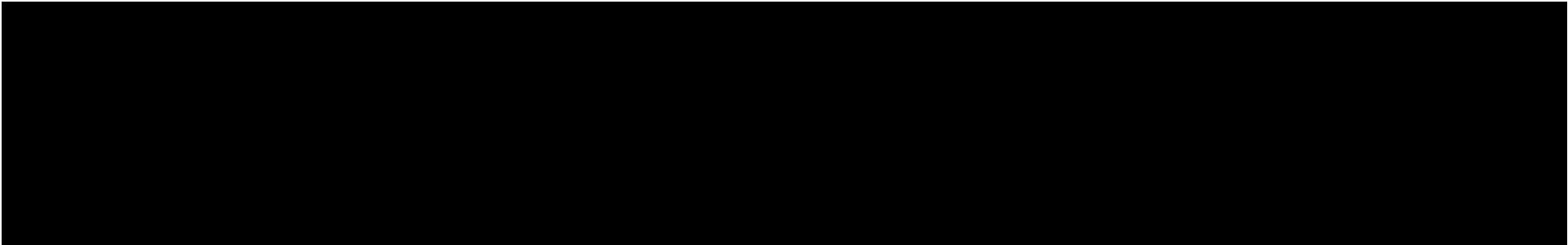
- What personality traits are important for success in your company?
- As an entry-level employee, what can I expect to be doing 2, 5, 10 years from now?
- What can a new entry-level hire expect in the first 30, 60, 90 days?
- What made you chose the company?
- What things has your company accomplished of which you are especially proud?
- For how many years does the entry-level employee typically stay with the company?
- What percentage of applicants are eventually hired?
- What is the retention rate in the company?
- Do you expect your employees to relocate?

Career Fair Don'ts

- ❑ **Don't cruise the booths with a group of friends.**
Interact with the recruiters on your own. Make your own positive impression!
- ❑ **Don't carry your backpack, large purse, or other paraphernalia with you.**
Carry your resume in a professional-looking portfolio or a small briefcase. It will keep your resume neat and handy, and gives you a place to file the business cards of the recruiters you meet
- ❑ **Don't "wing it" with employers.** Do your homework! Research the companies just as you would for an interview
- ❑ **Don't come during the last half hour of the event.** Many employers travel a long distance to attend the fair and may need to leave early. If you come late, you may miss the organizations you wanted to contact!

5 Things to Take Away from a Career Fair

- ❑ **Business cards from the recruiters you have met.** Use the cards to write follow-up notes to those organizations in which you are most interested
- ❑ **Notes about contacts you made.** Take paper and pen with you to write down important details about particular organizations, including names of people who may not have had business cards. Take a few minutes after you leave each table to jot down these notes
- ❑ **Information about organizations you have contacted.** Most recruiters will have information for you to pick up, including company brochures, computer diskettes or CD's, position descriptions, and other data. Don't gather lots of toys even if you really want them- that's not why you are at the fair
- ❑ **A better sense of your career options.** If you have used the event correctly, you will have made contact with several organizations that hire people with your skills and interests. In thinking about their needs and your background, evaluate whether each company might be a match for you
- ❑ **Self-confidence in interacting with employer representatives.** A career fair gives you the opportunity to practice your interview skills in a less formidable environment than a formal interview. Use this experience to practice talking about what you have done, what you know, and what your interests are



The time you spend preparing for a career fair may determine your success and ability to secure an interview with an employer. Visit the Office of Career Services for resume assistance as well as to get information about the employers attending the fair. No one can sell you like you so put in the time and effort to market your brand successfully.

Contact the Office of Career Services to schedule an appointment for a mock interview, discuss career options, or get assistance in writing your cover letter and resume, and other career-related matters.

Monday, Wednesday 12:00pm – 4:00pm

Tuesday, Thursday 9:00am-1:00pm

Friday 10:00am-12:00pm

SBE, Suite 230 or 672-1205

www.uncfsu.edu/CareerServ/