

Preparing for a Career Fair

Career Fairs are opportunities to connect with employers and expand your awareness of the world of work. Employers attend Career Fairs because they want to meet potential talent for their organization or they want to promote their organization as an employer of choice.

Benefits of attending a career fair:

- Explore options, build awareness and learn more about companies and roles
- Expand your network and connect with recruiters for current or potential opportunities.
- Learn more about what skills and qualifications employers are looking for to help you tailor your application for current roles or to help you understand what skills to develop.
- Practice networking and talking with employers about your skills and qualifications.

Before the Career Fair

- 1. Update your resume and LinkedIn profile.** Get feedback from your faculty career office or Student Success Centre career professionals.
- 2. Research the companies and organizations that will be attending the fair**
 - Look up their website, social media, and LinkedIn page to understand more about the company
 - Look at the companies' career pages to learn more about current opportunities or student recruitment programs such as co-op, summer positions, internships, new grad programs.
 - Showing potential employers that you have knowledge about and an interest in their company is a great way to make a positive impression at the career fair.
- 3. Develop a list of companies or organizations to connect with at the Career Fair.**
 - Investigate industry/sector information and used LinkedIn or the Alumni and Advisor Network to identify Mac Alumni who may work there
 - Research companies' accessibility and inclusion initiatives.
 - Be prepared with your targeted list of organizations, but also keep an open mind about what you might learn at the fair and about other organizations not on your list.
- 4. Prepare questions to ask at the fair.** Some examples:
 - What are the skills (transferrable and technical) that your organization looks for in candidates for X role?
 - What makes a person successful in this role and/or organization?
 - What advice do you have for university students/graduates regarding getting into this field?
 - Are there professional networking opportunities you would recommend?
 - How would you describe the culture of the organization?
 - Mention what you've learned about the organization and ask a related, relevant question.
 - Avoid questions that pertain to salary, benefits; they are not appropriate for this setting.



5. Prepare your professional introduction

- Prepare and practice an introduction of 30 seconds or less that includes your education, professional interests, some key strengths/skills/qualities and relevant experience.
- Don't underestimate experiences that may not be directly related, but can showcase important transferable skills. Go beyond simply stating your name and the program you're in.

During the Career Fair

- Present yourself positively and confidently. Build rapport by making good eye contact, smiling, speaking clearly.
- Leverage their questions to share examples from your past experiences and skills gained.
- Always speak positively about your experiences and education.
- Do not monopolize the representative's time. Thank them and excuse yourself to end the conversation to allow others a chance. Ask how to best follow-up (e.g. email or LinkedIn).
- After conversation ends, discreetly take notes of your conversation to use in follow up.

After the Career Fair

Optimize your chances of getting an interview (or job offer) by following up with companies you interacted with during the fair. This will help them remember you, and it shows that you're truly interested and proactive in your job search. Here are some suggestions:

Follow up with contacts

- Email recruiter or send a message on LinkedIn (try to find out their preference during the fair).
- Visit your new contact's LinkedIn profile and send a request to connect. Include the 'Add a Note' feature to provide context for the request (LinkedIn browser version required & LinkedIn only allows 5 free connection messages per month).
- Explain where you met and why you're contacting them. Tell them something you learned about the company or the role they're recruiting for while reiterating your interest and thanking them for their time. If you have submitted an application, let them know.
- Follow the organization's LinkedIn page to stay informed, engage by liking content of interest.

Apply to opportunities

- Submit your application online, especially if the recruiter requests you to do so.
- Mention that you connected with a recruiter (include their name) in your cover letter.
- Mention something you learned about the company or role in your cover letter as part of why you're interested in applying.

Check out [OSCARplumcmaster.ca](https://oscarplumcmaster.ca) for more events, company recruitment sessions, workshops and job and volunteer postings to support your professional development.

Check out the [Student Success Centre Job Search Webpage](#) for more resources and services.

