

VIRTUAL FAIR DIGITAL CHECKLIST

I'M GOING TO A VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR; HOW SHOULD I PREPARE?

Virtual career fairs are the way of the present and possibly the future. While you might think it would be easier to connect with employers virtually, it takes just as much preparation as an in-person event. Follow the steps below to set yourself up for success at the virtual career fair and beyond.

BEFORE THE VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR:

Update your Handshake profile

Your Handshake profile helps you receive personalized recommendations for upcoming events, and recruiters use profile fields to find students to invite to their sessions.

- Check that the basics are complete – work history, student organization involvement and major.
- Upload a resume for employers to see, and change your profile to public.
- Select the job types, locations and roles that interest you in order to help recruiters understand your preferences.

Research what employers are attending

Visit employer's Handshake pages, check out company websites and look for recent news articles to gain a sense of mission and values, as well as how you can be an addition to the teams that interest you.

- Read the student reviews of the employers on their Handshake pages. This is a great way to learn about the first-hand experiences of your peers.

Schedule times to meet with employers

Once you know what employers you want to connect with at the virtual career fair, go to Handshake and schedule time with each. Time slots are limited and will fill up.

- Schedule an appointment in Handshake by going to the Jobs tab at the top, clicking on Applications, clicking on each Virtual Career Fair Employer Chat and selecting your desired time slot.
- Your scheduled chats will appear in the "On-Campus Interviews" tab on Handshake.

Practice your pitch

Have a short introduction prepared to impress the employers and to optimize your time with them.

- Questions to think about: Why are you interested in this company? How is your previous work experience relevant? What draws you to this field?
- Practice with the counselors and advisors from Student Life Career Counseling and Support Services or your college career service office to ensure that you're ready to answer without hesitation.

Have a technology dress rehearsal

Choose your device wisely, and avoid last minute surprises by doing a dry run with your technology. You don't want to miss out on a great career opportunity due to technical issues.

- Stabilize your camera by using a desktop, laptop or propped-up tablet.
- Download any necessary software, if needed. Install the software early, leaving enough time to work through any problems that need troubleshooting.

Make a list of questions

Prepare several questions to ask each employer that are related to the organization or the positions you are interested in. Make sure these questions are insightful and not easily answered by looking at the organization website. Sample questions could include:

- "I read that your company just started a project doing _____. What opportunities would an intern have in this project?"
- "What do you like most about your job and working for _____?"

Get organized

Set yourself up for success by taking time to prepare your workspace. Doing a few small things to get organized can help you stay calm and be confident when it's your time to shine.

- Look at your workspace to make sure it is free of distraction for both you and the employer.
- Have a notebook and pen nearby to jot down topics that were discussed, your thoughts about the organization and contact information.



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DAY OF THE VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR

Look good, feel good

Even though you are not meeting employers face-to-face, you still need to dress the part. Professional attire will help you feel confident and make a good first impression. Remember to wear neutral colors, as well as avoid any patterns or jewelry that may be distracting on camera.

Arrive on time

Whether virtual or in-person, promptness is necessary. With limited time to meet with an employer, you need to optimize your time slot and show that you are dependable and respectful.

- Confirm your scheduled time slots by looking at the “On-Campus Interviews” section of Handshake.

Maintain eye contact and practice active listening

Smiling and nodding occasionally are essential non-verbal cues to demonstrate your interest and engagement during a virtual career fair.

- Avoid attending from public places, if possible. If there is nowhere quiet and distraction free that you can think of, consider your car.

Use clear, professional business communication

Virtual career fairs require that much of your communication will be done through written interactions in the chat function of the platform, so your written communication needs to be on its A-game.

- Grammar matters! Avoid text lingo, slang and emoticons.

Ask for next steps and contact information

When talking to employers at the virtual career fair, don't hesitate to promote yourself by offering to send them a copy of your resume. And make sure to ask about the next steps in the process.

- Write down the employer's contact information and ask how to best stay in touch, as well as if you can add them to your LinkedIn network. This is a prime opportunity to build your network and learn about other opportunities.

AFTER THE VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR

Apply to open internships and jobs

Visit the employer's Handshake page and their website to see what positions are posted. Make sure to check back frequently as new opportunities are posted daily.

- Not ready to apply yet? That's ok too. Save the jobs you are interested in on Handshake to receive reminders about upcoming application deadlines.

Reach out with a thank you

Don't let too much time pass before you reach out to employers through email, by phone or with a hand-written note to thank them for their time. Don't forget to express your interest with their company.

- Take the opportunity to refresh their memory by reminding them why you are a promising candidate and what skills and experience you have to offer.

Organize and reflect

Review the information you've gathered and make additional notes on the employers you've connected with and positions for which you'd like to apply. Also, jot down the questions that employers asked, as you may hear them again.

- Keep the lines of communication open by putting reminders on your calendar to send follow-up inquiries.

